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Artistic (Re) Creation in Paradise Lost*:*
Milton's Ecology and the Ontological Hierarchy of Perfection

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Milton's ecocritical vision of the natural earth. Through *Paradise Lost* Milton suggests that there is a powerful relationship between humankind and their environment, and humankind's detachment, rejection and destruction of their environment will inevitably lead to physical and spiritual dissonance. The ecological ethic—the responsibility to labour and creativity with respect to the earth—is both a physical and a spiritual guide. Active gardening allows for physical communication and Adam and Eve's praise establishes spiritual communication. Likewise the earth benefits from their care and provides shelter and sustenance. This relationship of reciprocity, or, hierarchy of perfection, is set in the contextualized, symbiotic community of Eden. Monist concepts of power allow for hierarchy of matter, avoiding dominant power of one being over another, leaving room for relationships of responsibility rather than domination. Thus it is possible to understand Adam and Eve's relationship as inherently symbiotic.

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Artistic (Re)Creation in *Paradise Lost*:
Milton's Ecology and the Ontological Hierarchy of Perfection

Introduction

> *Milton, though now blind, has retained a fine sense of biophilia, the innate pleasure from living abundance and diversity, particularly as manifested by the human impulse to imitate Nature with gardens. But he is far from satisfied with the mere dream of natural harmony.*
>
> *Edward O. Wilson 212*

In his recent study of the relationship between humankind and their natural world William Jordan, restoration ecologist, maintains that active human participation with nature will ultimately enable a physically sustainable relationship between society and the environment. Jordan suggests that by establishing rituals of restoration humankind can address the ecological ambiguities of the bond between themselves and nature. Jordan explains that many traditional creation stories also seek to understand this bond, essentially asking this question: "How, having fallen from grace, is one redeemed back into unity with the world represented by the Garden?" (57). Jordan maintains the answer lies in rituals of individual and community interaction with nature—rituals ranging from planting a garden to restoring native grass species to the prairies.

That connection and unity between humankind and nature is spiritual, psycho-social, and physical is an underlying assumption informing narratives of creation. Ultimately, creation connects humankind to their creator. This perception also informs the creation narrative of *Paradise Lost*. And while John Milton first asks *how* it was possible for humankind to fall, his concern with the redemption of humankind to their creator is primarily represented by establishing unity between humankind and their natural environment. This unity is enabled through humankind actively participating in the ecology of Eden. Thus while Milton significantly precedes concepts of ecological restoration and environmental policy, having lived two centuries before the term ecology even entered the English language[1], his consideration of the eminent connection between humankind and nature is illustrated in an ecologically conscious manner. Milton's ecological ethic espoused through his depiction of Eden informs Adam and Eve's active and independent relationship to both the physical and metaphysical universe enabling their capacity to develop ontological awareness and spiritual perfection, thus potentially serving to increase the potential for the spiritual perfection of Eden's beings.

This thesis focuses on Milton's ecocritical vision of the natural earth. Both the consideration of Milton's use of the pastoral poetic tradition and his alterations of this tradition and the debates surrounding England's natural resources and land rights are supportive in understanding Milton's vision of Eden as an attainable and recognizable environment. Additionally, Milton's concept of creation out of chaos is important in understanding Eden's pastoral composition. As all creation evolves out of chaos and advances forward into order and goodness so too may it degenerate and retreat back into chaos if not carefully tended. Milton specifically demonstrates how Adam and Eve are to tend the garden to avoid its deterioration back into a chaotic state.

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[1] Coined by German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1866 the term ecology (oecologie) referred specifically to scientific examination of nature. However, as Matthias Gross points out, since the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's book, The Silent Spring (London: Penguin, 1999), and "especially since the early 1970's, the term ecology has come to connote philosophical, moral and political viewpoints as well as a specialized field of scientific inquiry" (11, 33).

Both the labour and the responsibility of gardening within Eden are significant not only in terms of tending the physical creation, but also as a practice by which Adam and Eve advance their own relationship and their spirituality. Gardening as a creative process educates and informs Adam and Eve's marriage by providing a basis on which they learn to interact and appreciate their various characteristics, and initiates their potential for spiritual growth. Through *Paradise Lost* Milton suggests that there is a powerful relationship between humankind and their environment, and humankind's detachment, rejection and destruction of their environment will inevitably lead to physical and spiritual dissonance.

Ecocriticism and Milton's Environmental Ethic

The theory of ecocriticism examines the relationship between humankind and their natural surroundings as revealed through literature[2]. Two main clarifications of ecocriticism will be helpful before proceeding to Milton's text. According William Rueckert, ecocriticism initially follows Barry Commoner's[3] first law of ecology which states that "everything is connected to everything else" (Rueckert 112). Rueckert explains that this relatively simple law lays the foundation for ecocritical theory. Expanding this law, he states, "there is a reciprocal interdependence of one life process upon another, and there is a mutual interconnected development of all earth's life systems" (112). In some way or form all nature intrinsically depends on each individuated element, and in consequence, all nature is affected by the actions of each element. Another aspect of ecocriticism, expressed by Rueckert, is Ian McHarg's description of the ecological world: "'the greatest conceptual contribution of the ecological view is the perception of the world as a creative process'" (111). Creation is continuously in the process of creating. Underlying the principles of ecocriticism is a belief in the potency of creativity—nature itself is a creative force and humankind, through necessary interaction with nature, is affected and influenced by this creative potential. In essence, ecocriticism perceives an organic relationship between literature and humankind.

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[2] First described by Joseph Meeker as *literary ecology*, "the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works" (9), *ecocriticism*, termed by William Rueckert is "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (Glotfelty xx). Cheryll Glotfelty broadens the definition, stating that ecocriticism is "all possible relations between literature and the physical world" (xx).

[3] American ecologist who wrote two seminal books: The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology (NY: Bantam Books, 1972) and Making Peace with the Planet (NY: Putnam, 1990).

Throughout *Paradise Lost* Milton demonstrates an ecological consciousness that originates out of a dynamic system of creation founded upon a hierarchical scale of nature[4]. Traditionally on a fixed scale, Milton alters this system significantly by illustrating a system that allows all beings to interdepend on each other while actively pursuing, in different degrees and forms, their relationship to the divine creator. Ecologically speaking, Milton proposes a symbiotic relationship between all elements of creation.

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[4] The hierarchical scale of nature is closely related to the tradition of "The Great Chain of Being", a concept originating out of Aristotelian thought. Dennis Danielson explains that Milton does not fully subscribe to this system: "the main thrust of his thought is directed away from such a conception. In particular, he rejects both the body-and-soul dualism that accompanies Neoplatonist theology and the suggestion that creation was accomplished by necessity or in accordance with a necessary pattern" (101). See also A.O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge: HUP, 1960) and C. A. Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford: OUP, 1966).

Milton's articulation of the ontology[5] of humankind is directly related to the symbiosis of creation. While Milton's ecological consciousness, demonstrated through symbiosis, functions on a spiritual or ontological level, it also includes practical environmental concerns. Aside from numerous references to Adam and Eve's role to command, rule, dominate, subdue, till and dress the earth, familiar language of Genesis describing stewardship and gardening practices, Milton also includes conversations about moderation and subsistence. Nature itself is assumed to be inherently moderate. Adam, understanding moderation, fails to understand the value of the heavenly bodies; he questions Raphael, asking "How nature wise and frugal could commit / Such disproportions, with superfluous hand" (8.27, 28).

Moderation and subsistence also provide physical and intellectual methods of self-governance. Adam, Eve and Raphael's meal "suffic't" without burdening nature (5.451, 452) and Raphael uses this awareness of subsistence to explain their need to moderate knowledge (7.126-130). Milton's familiar line "be lowly wise" (8.173), describes the moderation of both sustenance and knowledge, human attitude toward nature and the divine, and an ethic on which Adam and Eve are to found their understanding of earthly symbiosis. And while these pragmatic *green* concerns of subsistence, moderation and stewardship seem more suggestive of more recent concerns than of the seventeenth century, as Nick Pici suggests, "subtle undercurrents of green philosophy and ways of living, even certain inchoate ideas that presage an ecological science, are evident within the paradise Milton has constructed" (35). While labelling Milton an "environmentalist" or *Paradise Lost* as an "environmental treatise" borders on anachronism, and may be, as Pici suggests, "imprudent or presumptuous" (35), as it stands, what Milton proposes in *Paradise Lost* is, in a very real sense, an environmental ethic. As suggested by Pici, Milton's environmental ethic contains the principles of environmental practices—those which are of great concern in our current century. These "ideas of moderation and stewardship, the practicing of vegetarianism and gardening, pointed connections between God and nature, and an overreaching picture of mutual, harmonious human living with nature" (35) are discussed by Milton in *Paradise Lost* through various voices and some seemingly contradictory assertions. Diane Kelsey McColley states, while "the epic presents these issues in the dramatic voices of characters with a range of attitudes…it does so with a pervasive ecological consciousness in its ethics, theology and language" (*Milton's Environmental Ethic* 58). Jeffery Theis suggests that *Paradise Lost* is "a literary work of environmental reclamation that reinvigorates the Genesis accounts of how one should know God by living in the natural world" (81).

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[5] Generally defined, ontology is "the science of being in general, embracing such issues as the nature of existence and the categorical structures of reality" (Honderich 643). While there have been many different categorical structures proposed throughout history, a "categorical scheme typically exhibits a hierarchical structure, with 'being' or 'entity' as the topmost category, embracing everything that exists" (643). In *Paradise Lost* it follows that God, the ultimate perfect being, represents the topmost position. All other beings exist below God in a hierarchical sequence based upon their degrees of spiritual completeness. While beings are differentiated by spiritual completeness, all matter and being is regarded as good and therefore, in terms of spiritual and cosmological importance or power, no one being is superior to another.

The environmental ethic in *Paradise Lost* expresses both the fundamental assumptions of ecocriticism as well as more practical practices of green concerns. At its centre, Milton's universe functions symbiotically, relying on connection for growth and creativity. At its core, symbiosis is integrated, mutual and active. Ontologically, symbiosis suggests a dynamic state of being: all creation coexists in mutually dependent relationships which are, by virtue of their mutuality, in a continuous state of reaction. Similar to what Ellen Goodman refers to as *reciprocity of influence* and Dianne Kelsey McColley calls the *transmission of benefits*, symbiosis in Eden directs creativity and growth, establishing both communion and community between humankind and nature. Milton's universe is also guided by a quintessential and divine creative force, God, which actively drives humankind. Practically, as Pici suggests, Milton demonstrates Adam and Eve's ecological concerns through gardening, stewardship and vegetarianism, as well as portraying a Creator who, through his angels, teaches Adam and Eve to be ecologically aware of their natural surroundings. In this respect, both Milton's symbiotic natural theology and his demonstration of human labour and ethical choice in terms of nature suggest his concern with humankind's necessary and influential relationship with their natural environment.

Milton and the Pastoral Tradition

The pastoral tradition is influential with regards to the ecological concerns expressed in *Paradise Lost*. While a complete study of Milton's Eden within the scope of the pastoral tradition is too large a subject to be considered adequately in this thesis, it is worth mentioning the familiarity of this type of illustration of the natural earth to Milton's readers. As John Knott explains, "we are not accustomed to thinking of Milton's Eden in the context of pastoral poetry because it is so obviously a special case, a prelapsarian world where there are no 'busie companies of men' to flee" (6). Yet Milton's use of the pastoral genre in *Paradise Lost* enhances his ecological directive by reiterating an already identifiable motif to Milton's readers. At the same time, Milton, unlike many of his literary predecessors, extends the pastoral motif through the inclusion of an ethic rather than intending it as an escape from "real life". Thus, unlike Knott's conclusion that after the Fall "Adam must learn not to look to his natural surroundings for confirmation of God's benevolence and his own well-being" (61), I believe Milton actually extends the relevance of his description of prelapsarian living to the altered postlapsarian life.

As Nick Pici explains, pastoral poetry "as the ancient Greeks conceived of it, would typically be concerned with the celebrating of the bucolic life of shepherds in an Arcadian world of nymphs, mountains, pastures, and striking natural beauty" (35). Renaissance writers such as Sidney, Marlowe and

Fletcher, as well as Milton, implement this genre into their own poetry[6]. Milton's poem contains a number of distinct aspects of the pastoral: descriptive language and imagery, an invariable climate, non-predatory animals, inoffensive plants and the lack of strenuous labour for humankind (Pici 36-39). Milton's Eden is "A happy rural seat of various view: / Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm, / Others whose fruit burnish't with Golden Rind / Hung amiable, *Hesperian* Fables true"(4.247-250). The seasons, "Knit with the *Graces* and the *Hours* in dance / Led on th' Eternal Spring" (4.267-268). The lion "in his paw / Dandl'd the Kid" (4.343-344) and "Flow'rs of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose" (4.256) are interspersed throughout the hills and valleys of Eden. Adam and Eve "enjoy / Free leave so large to all things else, and choice / Unlimited of manifold delights" (4.433-435) and hence follow their "delightful task / To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs" (4.437-438). Through the use of the pastoral Milton is able to identify to his readers the beauty, sacredness and idyllic qualities of Adam and Eve's natural surroundings.

The difference between Milton's treatment of pastoral in *Paradise Lost* and that of conventional pastoral literature is his attitude toward Eden's attainability. Conventional pastoral landscapes are most often places which are either idealistic and inaccessible or impractical and escapist. The common rural setting provides a sanctuary for the mind and the soul—a retreat from urban life.

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[6] Recent studies on the pastoral include Paul Alpers, What is Pastoral? (Chicago: CUP, 1996); Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (Toronto: Vintage, 1996); Susan Snyder, Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton (Stanford: SUP, 1998).

Milton describes Satan's experience between Hell and Eden in this manner—illustrating Satan "as one who long in populous City pent / Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Air" who issues forth "on a Summer's Morn to breathe / Among the pleasant Villages and Farms" (9.445-448). The city is Hell, while the countryside the Garden of Eden. It seems that Milton is drawing both from the pastoral tradition and from personal experience. Satan's experience here seems acutely illustrative of the seventeenth century experience of the dichotomy between London and its outlying rural areas. Richard DuRocher explains,

> Even when he lived in the heart of London, young John Milton grew up surrounded by flourishing natural growth. Despite the increasing urbanization of London during the earlier seventeenth century, England remained a predominately agricultural society. While at Cambridge, Milton expressed his fascination with agricultural scenes in his Latin and English poetry, as *L'Allegro* most predominately shows.
>
> (*Careful Plowing* 92)

That rural lands are places of respite from urban life is a concept which is actually quite practical and attainable. As Barbara K. Lewalski relates, at his Bunhill Fields house Milton took "pleasure, as he always had, in his own garden and in long walks" (*The Life Of John Milton* 411) and at his Chalfont house "There was and is a pleasant garden in which Milton sat to take air" (443). Likewise, Milton's description of the creation of Babel (12.41-44, 110) out of black, polluted substances may have been all too familiar to his own experience of London life especially during a crisis such as the plague.

Thus while Milton references the urban/rural dichotomy in true pastoral form he does not associate the Edenic life with idealism or escapism. As Pici reminds us, *Paradise Lost* "is more than just a pastoral tour-de-force.... [it does] more than dramatize an unattainable escapist world where nature intended to delight and please the senses of both the fictional and actual reader" (34, 35). Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve in their pastoral surrounding is not escapist: it is their home[7], and they are responsible for all that is within: "This Paradise I give thee, count it thine / To Till and keep" (8.319, 320). Here the paradise to which Milton refers is the whole of the earth, not just the Edenic setting. Adam and Eve are "brought...into this delicious Grove, / This Garden" (7.537, 538), a specific location on the newly created and innocent earth, but ostensibly are responsible for the entire earth. This detail illustrates Milton's attempt to stress that all of the earth must be considered as sacred as Eden. The earth, as home to Milton's readers, is the same earth that was home to Adam and Eve. Even when Adam and Eve leave Eden Milton maintains they have the entire world "to choose thir place of rest" (12.645, 646). Milton stresses the importance of the prelapsarian ethic upon a postlapsarian earth because the natural world in its fallen state continues to be their home. Likewise, as Michael assures them, "surmise not then / His presence to these narrow bounds confin'd / Of Paradise or

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[7] McColley suggests that the word ecology conveys Milton's position effectively because of the nature of the earth as home to Adam and Eve. The meaning of the word comes from the Greek, *oikos*, meaning house, *logos*, meaning an expression of thought (Ethic 58).

Eden....doubt not but in Valley and in Plain / God is as here" (11.340-342, 349, 350). In her study of Edenic flora, Karen Edwards remarks, "Indeed, the poem reveals that the beauty in the Garden of Eden is the same beauty (dimmed, but only slightly) that inheres in the world around us, in both hemispheres, in all eras" (153). Similarly McColley states, "In calling to dress and keep the Garden of Eden—metonymy for the Garden of Earth of which it is the epitome—Adam and Eve demonstrate what we would now call an ecological consciousness" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 231). By portraying both prelapsarian and postlapsarian earth as home Milton maintains the position that the ecological ethic expressed in pastoral and prelapsarian Eden is relevant to all postlapsarian creatures and should not be viewed as merely idyllic and escapist. Thus, Milton's ecological ethic is not only attainable, but is integral to human existence.

Milton's Environmentalism and the Seventeenth Century

The social and political revolutions of the Reformation definitively frame seventeenth-century thoughts and practices relating to nature and the role of humankind within the physical world. Diane McColley describes these issues, stating that seventeenth-century poets questioned:

> the dominion of human beings over other beings at a time when mechanistic and imperialistic attitudes toward nature were just getting started; when agricultural experiment, colonization, and global commerce were subduing the earth; when theologians and

> philosophers were disputing whether the natural world was made only for temporal use or would participate in a material eternity.
>
> (*Ethic* 57)

Milton's reaction to the social and political ecological issues of the seventeenth century as seen through his portrayal of the natural earth is "anti-Baconian and anti-Cartesian in its representation of the noncommodified community of species" (58). Milton revolts against the general consensus that the earth is meant solely for human exploitation. His portrayal of Adam and Eve showing concern for moderation towards the natural world is "opposed to the attitudes of…explorers and scientists who hoped to turn the natural world into a factory of profitable commodities" (59). Undeniably, the commodification of the natural world is influenced by Calvinist attitudes towards the natural earth.

Biblical command states "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (*Gen.* 1:28). The historical interpretation of this verse gives humankind unlimited power and control over all physical nature. Notwithstanding this power, after the Fall, humankind is forced to toil the cursed ground. As Pici explains, in a Calvinist context the attitude toward the natural world is one of dominion because of the belief that nature is indifferent and hostile to humankind. As well, McColley suggests that the Calvinists believed that the "natural world was made exclusively for the sustenance of the human soul, the only part of this world deemed immortal, in its earthly pilgrimage" (*Ethic* 62). In effect, by separating the adverse moral environment and the immortal human soul, Calvinist thought supported rural experiments, colonization and the global economy regardless of the destruction to the world's natural resources. As Lynn White Jr. states, western "Christianity…not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends" (23)[8]. As McColley explains, "instead of a material, instrumental and perishable earth and a spiritual heaven, Milton presents all matter as emerging from God who diversifies it into beings that share both substance and soul"(*Ethic* 63). In this respect, Milton rejects the Calvinistic dualism that makes the whole earth a lived paradox of human and divine by joining heaven and earth as one substance. Consequently, Milton implies that the destruction of the natural world is synonymous with the destruction of the divine.

It is generally accepted that England's socio-historical struggle of the seventeenth century can be attributed to the social and economic transformation from feudalism to capitalism.[9] Shaping this transformation, Christopher Hill suggests, are two revolutions: one which succeeded in giving

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[8] For further study see Jeremy Cohen, "Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and master it": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989); Chris Fitter, Poetry, Space and Landscape: Toward a New Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995); Alan Rudrum, "Henry Vaughan, The Liberation of the Creatures, and Seventeenth Century English Calvinism," *The Seventeenth Century* 4 (1989): 33-54; Alan Rudrum, "For then the Earth shall all be Paradise: Milton, Vaughan and the neo-Calvinists on the Ecology of the Hereafter," *Scintilla* 4 (2000): 39-52.

[9] However, it should be noted that the reasons for and the timing of this movement are not generally agreed upon. For a succinct overview Mary Renton suggests Alan Macfarlane's study, The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, and Social Transition (Cambridge & New York: CUP, 1979) (Renton 173).

"political power to the propertied" (12) and one which failed in establishing a more socialist system. Conflict arose specifically over issues concerning enclosure of common farm land and waste areas used by commoners to grow crops and maintain animals as well as obtain firewood[10]. Hill describes the rural commoners as "victims of the rapid expansion of England's population in the sixteenth century.... liable to suffer from large-scale schemes for agricultural betterment—disafforestation, fen drainage and like" (36). Antonia Fraser recounts Cromwell's attitude towards these issues, explaining

> Back in the faraway 1630's he... [saw] the fen issue as a simple one of the sufferings of the common people. By 1653...Cromwell considered [drainage] a good work, in principle, only that the drainers had done too well for themselves and 'that the poor were not provided for'. The last stage came when Cromwell permitted orders to be made against those who had assembled together [to protest the draining].
>
> (629)

Fraser reasons Cromwell's attitude changed because of the unrest and instability those protesters caused within rural society. Forests and waste-lands, sites of contention and confrontation, add to the political tension that frames Milton's epic.

Deforestation began in England during the settlement of the Celtic people, and by the late sixteenth century both the domestic use and export of English woodland products had decimated the countryside creating concern for those who relied on the forest for subsistence (Schama 135-184)[11]. Recounted by Julie Sanders, Milton's awareness of the destruction and deforestation of Britain's forests surfaces early in his life in the writing of *Comus.* Sanders explains, "Milton's masque is referring directly to crown policies, not least over forestry, in the 1630's and to the vexed question in the Dean localities of 1634 of common rights"(15). Hill states, "Even Milton, not usually very conscious of economic problems, closed his *Proposalls…for the Preventing of a Civill War* with a plea for 'the just division of waste commons" (280), suggesting Milton's concern with rural affairs. Although Milton's career in government largely dealt with foreign affairs, George Sabine notes that Milton's good friend, Samuel Hartlib, was a prolific writer of tracts concerning common lands and agriculture (14). Mary Renton suggests, "Land ownership…the material manifestation of individual liberty, [is] an ideal that consistently informs [Milton's] writing" from 1644 to 1660 (153). Thus regardless of the extent of Milton's official experience in the economy surrounding property rights, his awareness of these issues and experience of rural life goes beyond his political writings and into his creative writings.

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[10] See also Joan Thirsk, Agricultural Change: Policy and Practice, 1500-1750 (Cambridge: CUP. 1986) and R.W. Hoyle, The Estates of the English Crown, 1558-1640 (Cambridge: CUP. 1992).

In *Paradise Lost* "Trees of God" (7.538) play a crucial role in providing food and shelter as well as marking the location of Adam and Eve's home. In addition, trees provide a home for the animals who "About [Adam and Eve] frisking play'd /…since wild, and all of chase / In Wood or Wilderness, Forest or Den" (4.340-342). Milton also uses the organic structure of the tree as a metaphor for human ontology and the natural universe, connecting Adam and Eve directly to their natural world. Most significantly, one particular tree represents humankind's ultimate failure. Alistair Fowler states, "As naturally, mankind (sic) is part and partner of a plant; so their misuse of a plant, disobeying the 'sovereign planter', must necessarily have the fruit of cosmic consequences" (21). Karen Edwards points out that in his catalogue of trees (4.139, 218; 5.22, 23, 260) Milton is quite deliberate in his inclusion and treatment of certain trees and certain tree names, "every plant named in paradise has an eastern and western, an ancient and modern, variety" (78).[12] This specific and deliberate naming allows Milton to draw upon socially relevant issues.

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[11] See also Oliver Rackham, Trees and Woodlands in the British Landscape: The Complete History of Britain's Trees, Woods and Hedgerows (London: Dent, 1990).

Edwards explains that the inclusion of the cedar tree is one example of Milton's intentionality. Reference to the highly valued cedar tree (4.139) is underlined by seventeenth century concern with the depletion of this tree, a valuable resource as cited in the works of John Evelyn and Thomas Browne (Edwards 164). Thus Milton's citation of the cedar in prelapsarian Eden "signifies the human responsibility to preserve" (165) by drawing on contemporary concerns about this specific natural resource. Edwards also addresses the attainability of prelapsarian Eden by noting that Milton represents the natural world as known to his audience rather than as an exotic paradise: "Milton's representation of the natural world dramatizes...what our postlapsarian world and the prelapsarian paradise have in common" (164). The citation of the cedar tree draws attention to a familiar resource for Milton's readers. Because Milton's Eden is illustrated by attainability rather than idealism, the cedar tree represents a resource that can be restored. The cedar tree, representational of prelapsarian abundance and postlapsarian scarcity, also underlines the potential that postlapsarian earth can be rehabilitated.

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[12] One purpose of which, Edwards suggests, is to reconcile "the seventeenth century's knowledge of classical and biblical antiquity...with its contemporary experiences and experiments in the New World and the Old" (78).

Alternatively, Edward explains, the Tree of Knowledge is not botanically named by God, Raphael or the poet. Remaining outside of scientific taxonomy, the only character who suggests a botanical origin for this tree is Satan. Edwards explains that by allowing Satan to name its fruit Milton uses Satan to demonstrate "the perils of an incautious construing of the natural world" (145). By falsely naming the fruit Satan misconstrues the nature of the tree in order to deceive Eve. In naming the fruit as apple, a fruit which Edwards suggests represents comfort and nourishment, Satan implies a sense of harmlessness regarding the situation.

In addition to concerns regarding forests and their use, the controversy over common land rights is one of the most significant debates surrounding the civil war. Mary Renton explains, "a fundamental legacy of the Revolution was that the idea of the king as the sole "owner" of all land was finally swept away" (154). The Parliamentarians fought against the Crown in their demand for personal ownership of property, a sign of the movement to the capitalist market. Taking this idea further, the radical agrarian sect, the True Levellers, or, Diggers, sought to avoid individual property altogether. Instead, they sought to establish common ownership of the land, making the people the sole "owner" of England.

Richard DuRocher suggests that through the image of the "careful ploughman" (4.983-985), an image that occurs amidst confrontation between Satan and Gabriel, Milton addresses the "seventeenth century controversy over enclosure" (95). In setting the doubting farmer, whom DuRocher reads as human (and not Satan or God), against the panoramic of nature, the figure of the ploughman, "humanizes the remote, heroic world of clashing angelic forces....open[ing] the epic argument into the strangely familiar world that the poet and reader share" (102). The ploughman and his strange familiarity evoke certain cultural assumptions for Milton's contemporaries. Locating this image in a speech made by Robert Cecil to the House of Commons in 1601, DuRocher states, "for those resisting agrarian change in England the ploughman would conjure up the image of established [monarchical] order" (102), a perception upheld by loyal Royalist farmers.

Alternatively, DuRocher explains, "during the 1640's and 1650's," the image of the ploughman "supported a completely different political agenda, that of the radical left" (103). As DuRocher suggests, the political position of the Diggers, as Christian agrarian communists opposed to the enclosure laws, is aptly represented by the ploughman.[13]

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[13] In his pamphlet, "Fire in the Bush" (1650?), Gerrard Winstanley describes the religious foundation for the Digger's attempt to establish a communist society. Warning against covetousness, materialism, selfishness and warfare in a prefatory letter, "To all the Severall Societies of Persons Called Churches, in the Presbyterian, Independent, or any other Forme of Proffession, in the Service of God", Winstanley writes "So long as you labour under this selfish, darke, imaginary power, you are strangers to the Sonne of righteousness" (Sabine 447), and concludes, warning that "So long as the Earth is intangled, and appropriated into

Citing *A Digger Song,* DuRocher highlights the lines, "With spades and hoes and plowes, stand up now, stand up now, / Your freedom to uphold, seeing Cavaliers are bold / To kill you if they could, and rights from you to hold" (Sabine 663). The Diggers, although "never a united, disciplined party or movement" (Hill 91), are most prominently known for an act of protest at St. George's Hill in April of 1649. William Everard, Gerrard Winstanley and "between one and two hundred followers" (*Careful Plowing* 103) began to farm the common land in this particular parish. As Hill explains, "St. George's Hill was just outside London, within easy reach of any poor man there who might be interested in the colony" (89). Similarly DuRocher states, "Visible from London, St. George's Hill...served as a beacon for the poor seeking sustenance" (104). Unfortunately their efforts were largely thwarted and their cause ultimately dismissed. Everard, Winstanley and their followers were taken to court numerous times by local Kingston landlords and had their homes and crops raided and destroyed by these same men. In effect, the result was the failure of the Digger cause (Hill 89-91). Relating this back to *Paradise Lost*, DuRocher suggests, "In terms of Milton's image of careful plowing, the Diggers may have contributed to both a sense of urgency and

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particular hands and kept there by the power of the sword; as it is, and your profession holds it up, so long the Creation lies under bondage" (Sabine 448). In closing "Fire in the Bush" Winstanley describes the two "greatest sinnes in the world" (496), "First for a man to lock up the treasuries of the Earth in Chests and houses...while others starve for want" (496), and second,

> for any man, or men, first to take the Earth by the power of the murdering sword...and then by Lawes of their owne making, doe hang, or put to death any who takes the fruits of the Earth to supply his necessaries, from places or persons where there is more then can be make use of by that particular family where it is hoorded up. (496-497)

potential failure to the scene" (104) of the clashing angelic squadron and the doubting farmer because "they failed both literally and metaphorically to bring in a harvest" (104). Thus, as DuRocher proposes, the ploughman represents political uncertainty. Furthermore, political uncertainty involving restrictions to access common land or forests also signifies economic, or ecological, uncertainty. The *logos*, or expression, of the land is largely connected to the nomen, or law, of the land.

The image of the ploughman is not Milton's only connection to the Diggers or their cause.[14] Politically motivated by poverty and hardships of common people Winstanley argues for the right to farm common land, drawing from the Genesis myth for defence of his communist endeavours. And while the Digger movement is largely viewed as socio-political movement that ultimately failed, the religious philosophy founding the movement, particularly in the seeming need for balance and connection between created matter and the divine, is particularly interesting in reference to *Paradise Lost*. In *The New Law of Righteousness* (1648) Winstanley writes concerning humankind's relationship to nature, stating

> In the beginning of time the whole Creation lived in man, and man lived in his Maker...The whole Creation was in man, one within, and walked

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[14] There are some reasons to discount any specific influence between the extreme radicalism of the Diggers of St. George's Hill and moderately radical John Milton, the most noted being social position. With regards to property laws Mary Renton argues that Milton's alignment of property issues and liberty and equity is very much an argument for capitalist individualism, and thus not at all representative of the Digger cause. Yet she acknowledges in a footnote "Milton's ideological connection with radical groups [is] an important dimension of Milton's overall view of liberty as it relates to land and property" (175).

> even with him…there was an evenness between man and all creatures, and an evenness between man and his Maker Lord.
>
> (Sabine 156)

Here Winstanley describes a stasis of perfection in "whole Creation", perfection that existed in the Garden of Eden. Referring to the image of the garden in Song of Solomon (5:1; 6:2, 11) Nigel Smith states that as a common seventeenth century illustration "of a lost perfection", for radical sects "it was a figurative statement of a perfect relationship for the believer to obtain with God" (261). As already noted, on both physical and metaphysical levels, Milton's version of the pastoral paradise is very much rooted in its attainability rather than its inaccessibility. Milton never suggests that Eden is a utopian vision.

Returning to Winstanley, Smith bridges the connection between the physical and metaphysical, writing

> For Winstanley there is a continuity between man, nature and God based upon the figure of the Garden, while he would seem to be implying that the 're-invigoration' of man is his perception and enjoyment of nature, which is as much to say that perfection is achieved when man returns to his original relationship with nature, when material and spirit are one.
>
> (260)

Thus evenness and continuity—humankind's original relationship with nature where "every creature walked evenly with man" and "every creature gave forth it self" (Sabine 155, 156)—are integral to establishing spiritual perfection. Informing this continuity and connection of humankind, nature and the divine is Winstanley's monist and materialist idea of God and created matter:

> The whole of Creation of fire, water, Earth and Aire; and all the varieties of bodies made up thereof, is the cloathing of God: so that all things, that is A substantiall being, looked upon in the lump, is the fulnesse of him, that fills all with himself, he is in all things and by him all things consist.
>
> (451)

This citation from *Fire in the Bush*, alluding to Romans 11:36 ("For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things"), and I Corinthians 8:6 ("there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things"), is similarly cited in Milton's *On Christian Doctrine* in response to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* with which Milton struggled.[15] Dennis Danielson relates Milton's struggle, rightly qualifying that "this doctrine of *creatio ex deo* does not mean that God is material the way in which [a] table is material" (39). Rather, materiality refers back to the original matter, the original matter referring back to God. In addition, the account which Winstanley gives for God as originator of all matter, "And this God, or almighty Ruler, is universall Love, strength and life; And as he begets and brings forth everything in their degree and kinde" (Sabine 451), is strikingly similar to Milton's verse in *Paradise Lost*, "one

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[15] The issue of Milton's role in the authorship of this work, first published in 1825, is currently in debate. For the purpose of this thesis I make the assumption that Milton played a significantly large part in the creation of this manuscript. For a full discussion see Michael Leib, "*De Doctrina Christiana* and the Question of Authorship," *Milton Studies* 41(2002): 172-230.

Almighty is, from whom / All things proceed, and up to him return /....by gradual scale sublim'd /....Differing but in degree, of kind the same" (5.469, 470, 483, 490). This monist attitude toward created matter as well as Winstanley's demonstration of continuity between humankind and nature and spiritual perfection is, as I will show, similar to Milton's conception of matter, God and the ontology of humankind, and provides a foundation for Milton's ecological ethic.

Milton's *Materia Prima:* Monism and Animist Materialism

> *Thus Milton's astronomical world represents the terrific idea of a material machina mundi that exalts Christ. Like the universe in Plato's Timaeus it is alive: animate throughout, it moves, engages in metabolic exchanges, and exhales, transpiring fragrant spirit to God in prayer. The fabric of this world in not cut of whole cloth—it is patched, rather, from Neoplatonic pieces and worn canonicals handed down from Medieval Christian Platonism. But Milton's passionately engaged vision of it seems original in its fullness of detail. And his cosmos, however orderly, has the capacity to surprise, as if instinct with life.*
>
> Alistair Fowler *33*

Milton's natural theology, in its emphasis on the connectedness of Milton's entire cosmos, is undeniably monist and materialist. To what extent Milton subscribes to these beliefs seems to be a continuous debate. Milton, as Stephen Fallon explains, "struggles to articulate monism with a vocabulary tempered by centuries of dualism" (102). Adding to the struggle is Milton's attempt to argue this seeming unorthodox theology within a narrative epic and a theodicy.[16] More than one critic has noted the discrepancies between Milton the theologian and Milton the poet.

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[16] John Rogers explains, "Milton's theory of the *ex deo* Creation, his monistic belief in the inseparability of body and spirit, his mortalist belief that the soul dies with the body, and his subordinationist faith that the Son was generated materially form the body of the Father—all

Milton's God, who is wholly good, is in all things and is from whom all things first emanate. By virtue of being all in all, God directs Milton's universe, and through emanation, the goodness of God is infused into all creation. Thus, Milton's materialism certainly does not result in atomism—meaning a fateful creation exclusive of a creator. Milton's monism attempts to avoid the dualism of traditional Christianity which demands an "ultimate and irreducible distinction" between God and the created world (Jones 344) as well as escaping the theodical problem of dualistic notions of good and evil, a belief upheld by the Manicheans. Milton adapts the doctrine of *creatio ex deo* as a fundamental assumption informing creation in *Paradise Lost*: nothing in creation exists outside the being of God. As stated in *On Christian Doctrine*,

> There are…four kinds of causes, efficient, material, formal and final. Since God is the first, absolute, and sole cause of all things, he unquestionably contains and comprehends himself within all these causes. So the material cause must be either God or nothing. But nothing is no cause at all….It was a substance and could only have been derived from the source of all substance.
>
> (*CPW* 6:307, 308)

Milton's monism involves a conception of creation which suggests that both the soul and the body derive from the same substance: "spirit is a rarefied matter, and matter is dense spirit. All things, from insensate objects through souls are manifestations of one substance" (Fallon 80). D. Bentley

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these great theological heresies situate Milton so far on the outside reaches of either Puritan or Anglican mainstream that critics have had difficulty placing his theology in a meaningful cultural context" (xi).

Hart summarizes Milton's monism, describing it as "the oneness of the primary matter underlying the diversity of all its secondary manifestations constitut[ing] also a continuity of substance between things and God, such that all substances are contained in the divine substance" (22). All material existence derives from Milton's "one first matter" (5.472); thus all matter is "an eternal aspect of God" (19).

Although Milton's earlier works experiment with variations of this theory, "by the late 1650's, having concluded that everything that exists is a parcel of what he calls...'one first matter', Milton broke with centuries of Christian orthodoxy" (Fallon 98). Yet, as Dennis Danielson suggests, "despite materialism's being a heresy, in fact one of Milton's most famous, we need to consider the 'orthodox,' strongly theodical motivation for his adopting it" (38). For Milton, the claim of *creatio ex nihilo* left open the possibility that matter created out of nothing, or "nonbeing" (40), "retain[s] a necessary element of nihility and [is] metaphysically evil" (40). Thus, God, in his creation of beings who are imperfect, is responsible for evil. Milton disagrees, believing instead that "the material cosmos is somehow *an aspect* of God's being" (Hart 21 *italics mine*), and "in that material that all potentiality and necessity inhere" (Danielson 38). As John Rumrich states, "In Milton's heretical theology a benevolent God takes the place of ominous nothingness as matter's source" (1038).

In his study of Milton's materialism, Stephen Fallon suggests that "all corporeal substance is animate, self-active and free" (81). John Rogers agrees, believing

> matter was endued at the Creation with a divinely sanctioned capacity for self-motion, virtue and perhaps even reason. Material substance, infused, like man, with the 'law of nature', rather than forced to obey, like the mechanists' atoms, a raft of mechanical laws arbitrarily established by a voluntarist God, this living matter was entitled…to exercise its own will freely in the *laissez-faire* world of creation. (12)

Although these assertions seem quite heretical, they illustrate Milton's rejection of orthodox determinism and predestination by positing freedom in material substances. Instead of static mechanistic laws governing matter, Rogers suggests active laws guided by the essence of God (*divina virtus*). As Rogers explains, Milton "oversees the dispersal of a power that need not remain hoarded within a sanctuary of systematic control, because it can be more efficiently redistributed to a mass of matter that can safely be trusted to govern itself"(113). God imbued this abyss with his own divinity granting all matter the potential to be good: "once the abyss has been impregnated with a self-activating *divina virtus*, the effective control over generation devolves on the now self-generating matter of chaos" (Rogers 114). Juliet Cummins proposes, "the latent goodness of chaotic matter appears when God puts forth his formative virtue at Creation and activates matter's tendency to become 'more refin'd, 'more spirituous, and pure'"(87). Thus activated, matter will act "good" because it contains the essence of God.[17] Yet at the same time Milton, most assuredly, would not deny God a fully active and divine role in all of creation, illustrating this role in *Paradise Lost* as, "one Almighty is from whom / All things proceed, and up to him return" (5.471, 472). D. Bentley Hart explains, Milton's

> God is immediately involved in the created universe; so much that...the divine creator who directly shares God's substance is present to the cosmos as the highest of creatures and that...the same divine substance is implicated in all the finite substances of which it is the real source.
>
> (23)

There is no question throughout the poem's entirety that the creator God actively participates in a relationship with his creation. As Alistair Fowler suggests, Milton's cosmos illustrates a "material *machina mundi* that exalts Christ" (33), materialism being a key component. Nonetheless, the proposal of dynamic and free matter suggests a creator God who both maintains and relinquishes control with regards to matter and material entities.

At this point a distinction must be made between the different degrees of material existence and their will to goodness, or perfection, specifically with regards to inanimate, animate and human entities. Although all are manifestations of one material substance, inanimate and animate matters do not attain goodness or perfection in the same manner as humankind. All matter is animate and active in different ways—the varying degrees demand matter to work to perfection "in bounds / Proportion'd to each kind" (5.477, 478). With reference to Adam and Eve Raphael suggests that through the nutrients of the earth their "bodies may at last turn all to spirit, / Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend / Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice / Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell"(5.498-500). Adam and Eve may, if they choose, become angelic beings. And although Milton allows all beings "Fancy and understanding" (5.486), only those with souls receive reason. Returning to Nigel Smith's suggestion that perfection is attained when humankind returns to their original relationship with nature, it is apparent that the potential for perfection entails both choice and reason. While suggesting that nonhuman matter is dynamic and free, it is not reasonable to suggest nonhuman matter has choice or rational capacities. Thus, the distinction between will and choice must be made. Drawing from Thomistic thought, the proposal that, "Any behaviour by which anything anywhere in the universe changes from potentiality to actuality is good; for such a change is a means to that thing's final end, namely, such likeness to God as it is capable of" (Jones 261) clarifies how inanimate and animate objects actualize their goodness. According to Milton, the will or tendency to change or actualize is part of the dynamic nature of material substance derived from the goodness of the

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[17] Rogers demonstrates how Milton's matter echoes his political science as well as his theology. He writes, by "banishing the centralizing logics of Calvinism and mechanism alike, [Milton secured]...a general scheme of individual agency and decentralized organization....there was, woven into the argumentative fabric of many claims for self-moving matter, an organized rhetoric...hostile to hierarchy"(15,16). Here Milton denounces the Catholics and Royalists alike, making way for democracy, or, protoliberalism.

materia prima. Likewise, "though the general definition of goodness as fulfillment of form holds for man as well as for other creatures, moral goodness involves more than is involved in the simple goodness of the behaviour"(261). Thus, in a Thomistic manner, Milton creates a distinction between human and nonhuman ability to attain goodness. Goodness and perfection, in a spiritual sense, are a distinctly human potentiality.

Milton's Chaos

The site of divine infusion of matter is the dark abyss of chaos which, for Milton, is a condition of God's existence. One of the most conflicting elements in *Paradise Lost* is that of the character of Chaos who, by virtue of existing apart from God in the poem, establishes theological dualism between primary matter and the divine creator. In addition, Chaos is seemingly hostile and antagonistic towards God, displaying anarchic tendencies which are often interpreted as inherently evil. Thus Chaos, representative of the state of chaos seems to contradict Milton's monist creation. Regina Schwartz concludes,

> With no less than justice, oneness and omnipotence of God at stake, Milton's position on the nature of chaos is no arcane piece of cosmological peculation. Rather, it is with the greatest of care that he must deliberately and explicitly assert the goodness of first matter. (9)

Similarly, John Rumrich avers, "If the poet conceived of this matrix as intrinsically hostile to God and creation, any attempt at theodicy would seem pointless" (*Milton's God and the Matter of Chaos* 1035). A good chaos, Schwartz suggests, is "vital to the success of his theodicy" (8). Thus, many critics conclude, in keeping with Milton's own theological convictions about the origin of created matter one must make the assumption that Milton's chaos is necessarily good.[18] A significant passage from *On Christian Doctrine* explains Milton's theological position:

> For the original matter was not an evil thing, nor to be thought of as worthless: it was good, and it contained the seeds of all subsequent good. It was a substance, and could only have been derived from the source of all substance. It was in a confused and disordered state at first, but afterwards God made it ordered and beautiful.
>
> (*CPW* 6: 308)

Here, Milton the theologian explicitly asserts the goodness of the first matter, blatantly demanding the assumption that the state of chaos cannot be evil. Milton the poet, as well, argues for the inherent goodness of first matter, "Such to perfection, one first matter all, / Indu'd with various forms, various degrees / Of substance" (5.472-474).

The inherent goodness in material substance is an indication of the influence of Augustinian theology in *Paradise Lost*. According to Augustine, "There is…a good which alone is simple and, and therefore, which is unchangeable—and this is God. This good has created all goods; but these are not simple, and therefore, they are mutable...Evil has no positive nature; what we call evil is merely a lack of something that is good" (*City of God* 217). Augustine attributes this lack to the original nothingness out which nature was first created: "You are good and all that you make must be good, both the great Heaven of Heavens and this little earth. You were, and besides you nothing was. From nothing, then, you created heaven and earth" (*Confessions* 285). Alternatively, Peter Fiore states, "Milton argues that all existing reality is good because it was made out of the substance of God. One of the poet's fundamental beliefs is that all things belong to him and are a unity in him" (14). Yet despite their fundamental difference concerning original creation between divine substance and nothingness (*creatio ex deo and creatio ex nihilo*), like Augustine, Milton believes that evil is a lack of being. Augustine's "God makes everything, and all he makes is good. Badness arises from the tendency of things to decay: 'for a thing to be bad is for it to fall away from being (*deficere ab essentia*)" (Honderich 645). Similarly, for Milton all evil is a defiance or deficit of a necessarily good existence. John Rumrich explains, "according to the Augustinian ontology that dominated Christian ethics from the fourth century through Milton's time, evil is not substantial but volitional, a wilful estrangement from the divine source of all being" (1037). According to Milton's theology, the first matter emanates out of the divine source of all being and is not wilfully estranged; therefore, the state of the first matter cannot be evil.

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[18] Schwartz offers a concise summary of the critical history, stating, "By and large, scholars have taken their cue from *De Doctrina Christiana*, accepting Milton's word on the goodness of first matter" (10).

As told to Adam and Eve by Raphael, heaven and earth's origin is a "vast immeasurable Abyss / Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild, / Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds/ And surging waves" (7.211-214). God himself is this abyss, and explains, "I am who fill / Infinitude" (7.168, 169). In the act of creation, the Son as "Filial Godhead" (7.175) silences these waves and rides into the abyss on the wings of cherubim. While in the abyss, "He took the golden Compasses, prepar'd / In God's Eternal store, to circumscribe / This Universe, and all created things" (7.225-227). Milton calls this abyss, chaos, and here "eldest *Night* / and *Chaos*, Ancestors of Nature, hold / Eternal Anarchy" (2.894-896). According to Raphael, God, through the Son, created the world out of chaos, that is, out of his own uncircumscribed bounds. Thus he created the limits of the world, permeating it with divine virtue: "the spirit of God outspread / And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth / Throughout the fluid Mass" (7.235-237). Those elements adverse to creation were purged downwards and the earth "self-balanc't on her Centre hung" (7.242). Thus creation was formed out of the dark abyss of chaos.

John Rumrich agrees with the proposal that an inherently evil chaos is not consistent with Milton's belief that all matter is essentially good. With respect to Milton's Christian beliefs, Chaos "should not appear to be God's enemy, not if Milton's theology of matter has any bearing on *Paradise Lost*" (*Milton's God* 1038). As a result, Rumrich admits that the dark overtones to Milton's abyss may be troubling to some readers. He explains that although Milton refers to the character of Chaos as an anarchical rebel and the entity of chaos as dark and shadowy, none of these adjectives imply malevolence towards creation itself (1039). Rumrich explains, in Spenser's, *The Faerie Queen*, "Milton's most acknowledged poetic influence…chaos [is] 'the wide wombe of the world' that lies 'in hateful darknesse and in deepe horrore'" (1037).[19] Rumrich states, "Milton's allegorical personification of chaos signifies an absence of God that is always already present—the vital, feminine core of his omnipotence" (*Milton Unbound* 104). In a somewhat awkward reading, Rumrich describes God as masculine, but with a feminine other who, by virtue of location in the abyss, is an entity that both exists and does not exist. According to Rumrich, chaos is God's feminine other. Thus God, as a masculine force, impregnates himself in order to create the world. In combination chaos and the earth are the womb of God: "the earth conceives and generates the very embryo that was her former self….a self-sufficient feminine process" (Rogers 116, 118). In this respect, chaos exists as a feminine dark "other" of God without containing evil because of the potential for creation. Considering chaos evil would assume division from the very substance which is its being, namely God. As Juliet Cummins explains

> Everything in the Miltonic cosmos is 'of God.' All the traditional evils—matter, darkness, femininity—are aspects of God and therefore good. Even evil is not an independent principle for Milton but a mere corruption of goodness, a degradation of material and spiritual purity. Evil is diminishing toward the status of non-being, becoming a metaphysical non-entity. (90)

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[19] *The Faerie Queen* 3.6.36.

For both Rumrich and Cummins chaos maintains its good existence through its connection to God. As an aspect of God, although wild, dark, unordered, and problematically feminine, chaos essentially retains its divine goodness, thus eliminating any theodical inconsistency.

Also offering an integrative explanation of chaos and order, Regina Schwartz differs in that she assumes that chaos is essentially evil. Schwartz explains, "Despite his doctrine of a good chaos, his poem depicts a very different one: a region that is 'waste and wild' and an allegorical figure who claims that 'havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain'" (10). Unlike Rumrich, Schwartz maintains "for all its disturbing implications" the chaos of Milton's poem "is far more hostile than he would ever acknowledge in his prose" (10). Instead, drawing from postmodern theory, Schwartz suggests a dialectical relationship between good and evil, chaos and order. Schwartz agrees that chaos is an aspect of a wholly good God as a necessary component of creating order:

> It is here, in a redemptive creation, that we find the seeds of reconciliation between Milton's description and his doctrine of chaos. *Felix culpa* is not an after-the-fact rationalization for Milton. We know good by knowing evil. Milton reads the logic of that fortunate Fall back into his cosmology: a fallen chaos is also fortunate, for it issues in creation.
>
> (35)

For Schwartz, chaos and order work as dialectical opposites, thus "with chaos continually threatening, creation must be perpetually reasserted…in cosmogonic repetition" (1, 6). According to Schwartz, Milton's evil chaos is the darker shadow of Milton's ordered matter—a necessary aspect of God's creative power. Thus, on a larger scale, "the primordial battle with chaos becomes symbolic of the human struggle with sin" (32).

In summary, while Rumrich and Schwartz differ in their assumptions concerning the moral core of chaos, they both make clear the generative and creative potential that chaos represents. Similarly, the importance of Augustinian influence on Milton's poem resides in the creative potential of the Garden of Eden. All corporeal and incorporeal entities are derived from one primordial matter whose origin, chaos, is an aspect of God. Primordial matter, by virtue of being in opposition to ordered matter for Schwartz, or by substantial interconnection for Rumrich, contains the very potential to incline towards spiritual perfection or goodness. Yet this inclination can go two ways. Schwartz states, "Chaos offers an awful temptation: not to create; to let darkness reign" (37). The *divina virtus* necessitates the potential for advancing to perfection; however, in suggesting that the *materia prima* by virtue of its chaotic origin, is simultaneously, or dialectically both good and evil, there is also a perpetual and necessary possibility for degeneration.

The origination out of the *materia prima* establishes continuity and connection between all kinds and degrees of material existence. Fallon explains,

> one becomes more fleshy or more spiritual to the extent that one is directed away from or toward God. [This] liberalized version of Pauline symbolism superimposed on Platonic dualism results in ontological mobility….In this emanative chain, moral purity is measurable in the degree of rarefaction of the body, but even the most pure and spirituous substance remains corporeal. The chain is dynamic; direction is more important than position.
>
> (83, 103)

This sense of movement, the dynamic possibility, thus goes back to Fallon and Roger's assertion of self-active matter. Catherine Gimelli Martin explains that "*in potentia*…universal physical properties [of the first matter] remain essentially on the side of life….[Milton's] reformed chaos is far more positive than negative, a medium of ambivalence and negation, but also of creative regeneration" (104). While Milton's forerunners believed that once the world was put in order it maintained order, Milton's matter appears free and active, continuously expelling itself out of God, and falling back and forth between chaos and order.

Milton's assertion of a wild and active chaos reinforces material dynamism: "For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four Champions fierce / Strive here for maistry, and to Battle bring / Their embryon Atoms" (2.898-900). As Stanton Linden explains, these four elements provide the "metaphysical foundation for a dynamic universe of motion, fluidity, and continual flux, a setting in which human transformation and ascent are entirely possible" (605).

Joan Webber suggests that Milton recognizes "that Creation began with imperfection, that it consisted in separating rather than uniting, and that Creation therefore remains unfinished, caught up in a progress towards a higher unity" (14). As "the Womb of nature" (2.911) containing "dark materials to create more Worlds" (2.916), chaos is the potentially active site of creation and creativity that is disorderly and frenzied while at the same time encompassing the possibility of something that is fully established and compliant to control. Thus, the dynamic and active nature of all matter suggests that material substances can revert back to their original state. While all material substance *tends* to become more refined, spirituous and pure, its inherent connection to chaos demands continuous nurture in order for goodness to be sustained. And as Milton's chaos establishes the foundation for the Garden of Eden through the word of God, it also stimulates a Garden that could return back to its original state. Therefore, the Garden must be tended to by caretakers who have been given moral authority and dominion—hence the role of humankind. In this respect, Adam and Eve must care for creation as if it is the womb of God. Because chaos, dark, wild and disordered, continues to affect the state of nature, Adam and Eve must continue to prune and prop Edenic vegetation. By immersing themselves fully in their gardening labour they increase the potential for infinite perfection to gestate and give birth.

Natural Hierarchy and Edenic Community: Milton's Reworking of Aquinas

The wild, dark and disordered depiction of chaos and its direct influence upon nature implies a struggle between humankind and their environment, and seemingly necessitates the need for dominion and control. As stated earlier, Milton does not subscribe to Calvinist attitudes of dominion and exploitation of creation. However, not only does Milton establish a hierarchical scale of nature within Eden, he gives Adam and Eve authority over creation. Adam and Eve's relationship to creation is described to Adam by Raphael through the metaphor of a tree:

> O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
> All things proceed, and up to him return,
> If not deprav'd from good, created all
> Such to perfection, one first matter all,
> Indued with various forms, various degrees
> Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
> But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
> As near to him placed or nearer tending
> Each in their several active spheres assigned,
> Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
> Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
> Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
> More airy, last the bright comsumate flower
> Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit

Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed
To vital sprits aspire, to animal
To intellectual, give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding.

(5.469-486)

Ultimately, this metaphor functions as a statement of ecological symbiosis on both physical and spiritual levels of existence. The metaphor of the ontological tree draws attention to the organic relationship between the natural elements of creation and humankind.[20] As well, the tree stands as a metaphor of dynamic growth, demonstrating to Adam and Eve that they contain the potential to grow as human beings. Linden explains,

> nearly all of the preceding part of Book 5...carefully designed to prepare Adam for the possibility of melioristic ascent from body to spirit...is figured forth so effectively in Milton's springing tree. This tree then, not only serves as metaphor and model for the nature of Nature but as a powerful and central moral symbol, the culmination of a consciously developed pattern, which introduces Adam to the possibility for human development and affirms its contingency on the obedience to God.
>
> (604)

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[20] Milton's literary sources for this metaphor are found in the works of Duns Scotus, Mercator, Robert Fludd and Jean d'Espagnet (Linden 608).

The organic interconnection between the elements of the terrestrial universe and the potential for growth and development are essential pieces of knowledge which Adam and Eve must impart upon themselves in order to understand their role within the Garden of Eden. Relationships are reciprocal and thus establish a different sense of dominion. The symbiosis which Milton proposes is founded on community, and it directs creativity and growth on both physical and ontological levels, establishing communion between nature and humankind. Thus, a means for the potential for spiritual perfection is attained. The purpose of dominion in *Paradise Lost* is thus greatly influenced by the symbiosis asserted in this metaphor. Specifically, symbiosis modifies the limits in which power can be sustained.

The hierarchical scale of creation is largely influenced by the natural philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Ellen Goodman proposes that Thomistic philosophy directly shapes the doctrines of the Christian religion in terms of humankind's relationship to Nature. Goodman states, "By synthesizing Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy, Aquinas is commonly recognized to have developed a systematic Christian view of the operations and interrelationships among parts of nature" (*Sway and Subjection* 73, 74). While there are noticeable differences between the theologies of Aquinas and Milton, they both generally agree that all of the physical and metaphysical universe directs itself towards and is directed by an omniscient being that diffuses goodness throughout the universe. W.T. Jones explains that for Aquinas, "Creatures and Creator form one universe, a single, continuous, hierarchy" (214). Aquinas' philosophy demonstrates a hierarchy of nature within the original creation. [21]

Goodman demonstrates Thomistic claims that all unified nature "exists for the more perfect....The less complete the powers of acting possessed by a form, the more its value is instrumental to a higher end, while the more complete its powers, the more it possess intrinsic value as the end in itself"(*Human Mastership* 9). Everything, according to Thomistic thought, is placed in order from the most base level of existence to the most spiritual. The higher elements, like the divine, are valued in and of themselves while the lower elements, like the earth, exist in order to serve the beings above them. Aquinas states, "the imperfect are for the use of the perfect: plants make use of the earth for their nourishment, animals make use of plants, and man makes use of both plants and animals" (qtd. in Goodman 10). For Aquinas, all matter falls into a hierarchical scale based on levels of subordination. Plants only exist for animals and humankind, animals only for humankind, humankind for God. In Aquinas' hierarchy, all matter, directed by divine influence, serves its superior.

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[21] Aquinas makes five claims for proof of the existence of God which ultimately lead him to believe in the existence of infinite and perfect being who created the universe. They are as follows: first, the fact that things move entails a first mover. Second, the order of causes found in the universe requires a "first in the chain of such causes" (Honderich 44). Third, because the physical universe can be both created and destroyed there must exist a being which is "a necessity out of itself" (44) for which there is no first creation and no final destruction. Fourth, gradation or hierarchy of goodness and trueness found in the universe necessitates the existence of the "cause of being, goodness, and every perfection in things" (44). And fifth, because everything in nature acts for a purpose "even though they lack awareness" (44) an omniscient being through whom all physical beings are controlled by must exist.

According to Goodman, Milton alters Thomistic philosophy by creating a more beneficial and mutually dependent environment. Rather than solely serving their superiors, entities in Milton's creation are also served by their superiors. Goodman explains, "Milton consistently bases subsistence in the natural hierarchy on the mutual welfare between superiors and the subjects which nourish them" (12). Aquinas presents a static and serene environment where all needs are naturally provided for. Alternatively, Milton presents an environment where nature must create, invent and labour in order to sustain itself. Goodman cites the bees building hives (7.491), birds building nests (7.424) and Eve decorating the bower as examples of this natural industry. Adam and Eve "actively serve their subjects" (13) by cutting back branches, harvesting fruit and, in that famous scene, by winding the vine around the elm tree. While Adam and Eve are placed in a certain position over the earth, dominion does not entail power; rather, it entails the possibility for perfection[22]. By establishing a position of responsibility towards the earth and by demanding Adam and Eve's participation, Milton's God also establishes a means through which they learn to become more perfect human beings.

Although influenced by Thomistic concepts of natural hierarchy Milton's creation does not sustain Thomistic concepts of power and dominion and thus alters the hierarchical scale. According to Jeffery Theis, Hebrew connotations of the words subdue and dominion derive from negative implications of slavery and severe power struggles. As a result, Christian interpretation of the creation story often leads to the belief in a master-slave hierarchy. Yet, in terms of an ecological ethic found in Genesis, these words are not necessarily used in a negative manner. According to Theis, the Genesis account expresses that the authority God has given humankind over the earth is likened to God's own authority over creation: "humanity must balance the harsh tenor of the two words with the knowledge that God blesses every act of creation....[they] must see all creation as harmonious and their rule over creatures must reflect this harmony" (63). Theis explains that while both chapters of Genesis deal with humankind's relationship to the earth, the second chapter "provides more information regarding how people should interact with nature" (63). Theis maintains that the importance of the second account is that it "lets us know that the earth creature is created out of a substance, in particular, from the earth itself" (63)[23]. According to Theis, the acts of tilling, dressing, keeping, subduing and having dominion over the earth are synonymous with serving, protecting and reflecting upon the earth. The basis for these acts and the relationship which Adam and Eve have with creation is Milton's cosmological tree metaphor.

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[22] It is interesting that Milton also reconfigures Aquinas' concept of natural evil by eliminating thorns from the roses (4.249-256), creating venomless serpents (7.498) and excluding vicious animals because this seemingly goes against Milton's vision of an attainable Eden. It seems Milton excludes these things so to portray Adam and Eve labouring in harmony with creation. Moreover, this later enables him to emphasise the disharmony produced by the Fall. The alteration is in response to Aquinas who suggests that Eden would be both deficient and improbable if thorns and duelling animals were not part of that prelapsarian universe. For Aquinas, the inclusion of these elements illustrates, from the beginning of time, humankind's necessary responsibility of power and dominion over a seemingly hostile creation.

Theis outlines the implications of Milton's "alternative hierarchy" (69) expressed through Raphael's tree metaphor. First, it establishes an ontological hierarchy where all is good and interconnected. Second, it places humankind within that hierarchy but not at its top—Eden is part of a larger hierarchy. Third, humankind is not fixed but may rise to perfection if they take nature's nourishing fruits and recognize their true origin. Fourth, nature and metaphor transcend their inherent limitations and reveal God to Adam and Eve. As Diane McColley relates, "Paradisal hierarchies are beneficent, flexible and reciprocal" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 232). According to Goodman, Milton allows for reciprocity in a hierarchically ordered world, establishing, without masterful dominion, a "community which transcends hierarchal distinctions", thus emphasizing the "integration and interaction of man (sic) and nature" (*Human Mastership* 13). Creation, invention and labour all derive from and sustain a willingness within creation to uphold mutually beneficial relationships. For humankind, who are given choice, this willingness develops into an ethical relationship with nature. To borrow from Aldo Leopold, "All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate" (239).[24] By establishing a fundamentally symbiotic universe Milton fosters the production of an Edenic ecological ethic.

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[23] According to Theis, the Hebrew meaning of the word for earth, ha'adama, and the word of person, ha'adam, clearly connect humankind to the earth.

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[24] Leopold's work, A Sand County Almanac, first published in 1949, is recognised as one of the earliest articulations of an environmental ethic. Theis states that Leopold's writings "broaden the scope of ethics beyond human community and argue that human survival depends upon ethical treatment of nature" (61).

The Nature of Perfection: Labour and Delight in Eden

This ecological ethic originates out of a symbiotic community. Creation depends on Adam and Eve for care as much as Adam and Eve depend on nature for subsistence. Adam's understanding of this relationship is voiced as he remarks to Eve that God has given them "so may signs of power and rule / ....Dominion given / Over all other Creatures that possess / Earth, Air and sea" (4.429-432). In this respect Adam understands that with only "One easy prohibition" (4.433) they are free to "enjoy / Free leave so large to all things else, and choice / Unlimited of manifold delights" (4.433-435). Adam continues to express his understanding, saying, "But let us ever praise him, and extol / His bounty, following our delightful task / To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs" (4.436-438). Adam and Eve understand that they have a direct relationship to the garden. They are to care for all that is contained within the physical earthly realm and labour within it. Additionally, Adam and Eve enjoy the garden and its provisions after their work is done:

> Under a tuft of shade that on a green
> Stood whispering soft, by a fresh Fountain side
> They sat them down, and after no more toil
> Of their sweet Gard'ning labour than suffic'd
> To recommend a cool *zephyr*, and made ease
> More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
> More grateful, to their Supper Fruits they fell

(4.325-331)

In Milton's Eden labour and delight are interactive and interdependent aspects of Edenic experience. More accurately, Milton's concept of prelapsarian delight necessitates labour.

In terms of classical or traditional accounts the inclusion of gardening labour in the Genesis myth is a Miltonic variation. DuRocher explains, "the inclusion of agriculture is remarkable if only because Milton could have entirely avoided it" (*Careful Plowing* 93). Similarly McColley states, "Even though Adam and Eve were joined and enjoined by God to dress as well as keep the Garden, it was unheard of before Milton to show them gardening" (*Gust* 127). Milton diverges from the traditional pastoral Edenic illustration by including labour. The issue of labour is complicated in this case. Pici states, "As a result of this ideally and flawlessly designed universe and nature, Adam and Eve, though they still must care for the Garden in other ways, are essentially free from cultivating the earth for sustenance or doing any real hard labour" (35).

I agree with Pici that their labour is not necessarily strenuous, but I do not believe that Adam and Eve are free from cultivating the earth. Not only does Eve's remark of the eventual need for assistance due to the Garden's fast growing nature show that cultivation is necessary, there are many other metaphors and examples of Adam and Eve's required labour. I believe that Milton uses labour in two different ways: first, Milton uses the pastoral motif for labour in order to accentuate Adam's toil of the earth after the Fall. In this respect Adam and Eve do not strain themselves in their respective labours but delight in one another and the natural surroundings in which they live. Simultaneously, Milton is implementing a Protestant work ethic within *Paradise Lost* through his illustration of labour (Pici 44). He establishes labour as an act of being—labour is neither strenuous nor superfluous while Adam and Eve are in Eden; rather it is necessary for human growth and survival.

Their labour and their delight, intermingled (4.439) provide a medium through which they begin to comprehend their humanity. Tending the garden is not just a mere pastime for Adam and Eve; the act of labour not only keeps the garden from disorder, but it also gives Adam and Eve the means by which they learn to develop their human circumstance. Neither humans nor nature exist solely for themselves, nor does one exist only for the other. Humankind, created in the image of God, are in Eden "there to dwell / And worship him, and in reward to rule / Over his Works, on Earth, in Sea, or Air" (7.627-629). As Lewalski states, "In the vision of the poem, this fundamental responsibility of man for his world is not a postlapsarian condition but has obtained from the beginning" (*Innocence* 91). Milton's deviation from the original garden myths "should be seen in terms of the subtle relationship…between the nature of a place and the nature of the beings who dwell in it" (90). Adam and Eve's relationship to the garden is an active relationship embodying a continuous task of reworking and reshaping the growth of the garden. The chaotic tendency of Eden—its inclination to grow wild—demands that Adam and Eve to labour in the garden.

It is important to understand the effects that an active and subordinate chaos has on Eden and on Adam and Eve. Chaos as a wildly active abyss holds the potential for all creative activity. It is not evil in its lack of being, like Satan and the fallen angels, but its "ontological deficiency…indicates instead a material potency that is a precondition of creation" (*Milton's God* 1041). This potential influences the Garden by excessive growth and affects the relationship of Adam and Eve by influencing their creative spirits. Rumrich states, "Far from being invariably hostile to creation, the energy of chaos seems vitally involved with creature's aspirations and erotic desires….For Milton the created order of material being in time cannot advance without disorder" (1039, 1041). Schwartz states, "We are offered a Creation that cannot be evil [by virtue of Milton's monism], but can become evil" (9). Chaos contains the medium for potential growth and stimulates creativity within the garden; thus it is required.

Labour is part of the necessary process of growth to which Milton ascribes. Not only does labour connect humankind to the earth, thus connecting them to the divine, but labour also allows Adam and Eve to progress in their ontological state. Adam states, "Man hath his daily work of body and mind / Appointed, which declares his Dignity, / And the regard of Heav'n on all his ways" (4.618-620). In Heaven, God elaborates on this appointment, explaining through the creation of Earth,

> Another world, out of one man a race
> Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
> Not here, till by degrees of merit raised
> They open to themselves at length the way
> Up hither
>
> (7.155-159)

Teresa Michaels explains, "labour not only declares man's (sic) dignity by reflecting his divinely appointed status, but also offers him the possibility of moving from one status to another" (503)[25]. Labour allows humankind a means by which to establish self-respect, it allows them to acquire knowledge and understanding of what it means to be human and it focuses, through nature, their relationship to the divine. Diane McColley explains,

> The gardening of Adam and Eve, then, is susceptible to all the levels of interpretation worked out through centuries of scriptural and literary exegesis: it is literally the care and cultivation of nature; morally, the cultivation of virtue in response to God's laws, both natural and revealed; ethically the nurture of marriage and children.
>
> (*Milton's Eve* 119)

In essence, Adam and Eve's gardening labour seeks to establish a means by which "Earth can be chang'd to Heav'n and Heav'n to Earth" (7.160).

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[25] Michaels' study also points out that Milton's poem contains "an odd combination for the fixed hierarchy of fealty and missionary zeal for a near emphasis on individual mobility and merit" (503), a tension which also expresses Miltonic ontology as per Raphael's tree—in essence the combining of Thomistic cosmology and radical Protestant meritocracy.

To be more specific, the performance of the act of gardening is what makes, or creates, the connection between humankind and nature. The very act of tilling, keeping and dressing makes meaning of human existence, and to go further, gardening thus establishes culture. Drawing from the theories of landscape historian, Fredrick Turner, ecosociologist Matthias Gross suggests that gardening is "a performing art that generates both knowledge and meaning as well as other values for the participants and society in general" (51). He also notes that once gardening begins to include a larger number of people it develops into civic responsibility and action (65). Thus single acts of labour develop into cultural practices and rituals which furthermore develop a sense of ownership toward the land. Gardening itself is a means of creating culture. Adam and Eve begin to contextualize their humanity through the very act of gardening thus creating and recreating the meaning of their existence though constant agricultural repetition.

The creative process of gardening thus becomes a process creating culture and meaning, or, the creation of art. In Eden this embodies the highest perfection. The process of their labour and the creation of their art is informed by Milton's representation of symbiosis (*Innocence* 91; *Mastership* 9). The command to labour is a command to create and is necessary for human growth. There is inter-reliance between the caretakers of the garden and the garden itself. Goodman points out "Adam and Eve do not simply rule in the enlightened self-interest but actively serve their subjects" (12); at the same time their subjects provide the medium for Adam and Eve's labour (as well as providing sustenance). Here, the creative artists mould and knead their medium in order to perfect it for the original artist, namely, God. Yet as Milton's matter originates out of chaos, the tenacity of their creation is emphasised. Their labour, as Lewalski points out, is not "ritual *gesture*" (90 *italics mine*), but an "immense task" (90), and as "everything has a tendency to regress to the chaotic state unless continually acted upon by a creative force akin to the divine creative power that first brought order out of chaos…this tension *defines* the responsibility of Adam and Eve as gardeners" (91 *italics mine*). Milton's animated Garden of Eden requires Adam and Eve to prop and prune because it needs tending in order to grow to its natural perfection. At the same time God requires Adam and Eve to prop and prune because it defines their role on earth and teaches them how to grow in divine human perfection.[26]

The exercise of this creative potential manifests itself not only through the tending of the garden but through the creation of poetry and art within the poem itself. The Sun, rising, shoots, "parallel to the earth his dewy ray, / Discovering in wide lantskip all the East / Of Paradise and *Eden's* happy Plains" (5.141-143) and compels Adam and Eve to bow "adoring" (5.144) and pay their morning orisons. Milton is specific in portraying this morning ritual as an exercise of creative potential, suggesting that Adam and Eve prayed "In various style, for neither various style, / Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise

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[26] Informing Milton's illustration of Eden is a broader tradition, including, in one significant instance, Spenser's Garden of Adonis. Glossed in the *Spenser Encyclopaedia*, Richard Neuse explains, "The Garden, finally, is the landscape of the soul…from which the soul thought itself an exile or fugitive, but which it rediscovers once it understands that world and soul are not mutually antagonistic but aspects of one reality".

/ Thir Maker, in fit strains pronounced or sung / Unmediated" (5.146-149). Their creative potential through hymn and prayer is not limited to the morning hours. The end of the day also compels them to praise: "Both turn'd, and under open Sky ador'd, / The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth and Heav'n / Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent Globe / And starry Pole" (4.721-724). The earth naturally stimulates Adam and Eve to act out of their creative potential and express their gratitude to their maker. By tending the earth and by valuing their role as caretakers of the garden, that is, by acting creatively on a physical level, Adam and Eve are enabled to release the potential from within themselves to create on a metaphysical level. Interaction with the earth facilitates Adam and Eve's ability to access their creative potential on different levels, therefore activating their ability to perfect themselves in terms of their spirituality and relationship to God.

Nature and the Process of Creation

The act of creating via gardening is then the process by which spiritual perfection is mobilized and attained. By virtue of their gardening acts Adam and Eve are, in fact, artists. By giving them responsibility and dominion over the earth God demands that Adam and Eve create. God encourages them through establishing labour as a necessity. God's expectation—the one requirement aside from the rule concerning fateful tree—is that "Created in his Image" they are, "there to dwell / ....worship him" (7.627, 628). Importantly, demand is not equated with divine coercion or control. As Milton explains through Raphael,

> God made thee perfet, not immutable;
> And good he made thee, but to persevere
> He left it in thy power, ordain'd thy will
> By nature free, not over-rul'd by fate
> Inextricable, or strict necessity;
> Our voluntary service he requires,
> Not our necessitated, such with him
> Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how
> Can hearts, not free, be tri'd whether they serve
> Willing or no, who will but what they must
> By Destiny, and can no other choose?
> ....
> freely we serve,
> Because freely we love, as in our will
> To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
>
> (5.524-540)

Adam and Eve are given the responsibility of tending the earth, but are free to integrate their own experiences into establishing creative patterns and rituals.

Milton's vision of Adam and Eve as gardeners and artists connects nature, or creation, with creativity. Hence, the creation of art is both a spiritual and natural experience. One of the most intriguing verses in *Paradise Lost* is

Milton's invocation of the muse in Book 3. Here, the now blind poet struggles with his lack of artistic vision and asks his muse for inward vision—a substitute for the ability to draw from his visual experiences. Admittedly speculative, it seems the blind poet would rather have outward vision than inward vision—thus assuming he believes that creativity emerges from experience with physical creation. Lamenting,

> Thus with the Year
> Seasons return, but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.
>
> (3.40-44)

Milton exemplifies his acute awareness that humankind's creative potential lies within the realm of natural experiences. The poet writes that he is separated "from the cheerful ways of men" (3.46) and is "presented with a universal blanc / Of Nature's works" (3.48). Milton describes his blindness as "wisdom at one entrance quite shut out" (3.50). For Milton, nature reveals more than delightful agrarian or sylvan scenes. There is wisdom to be found in Creation. Creation is origin, and to create is to seek origins. Ultimately, even in his blindness, Milton seeks the fundamental origin—and does so through detailed descriptions of a physical earth that he can no longer see. This ability to relate accurately how creation influences creativity has not been lost in his blindness.

Convincingly, Milton depicts his God as the original creator, or artist.[27] As Ann Torday Gulden explains that while in Milton's Eden "art and nature are independent[28]...On the other hand, Milton's text appears to endorse the idea of 'Nature as the Art of God'" (17); a concept also found in the works of Dante, Thomas Browne and Robert Fludd. Gulden explains, quoting Edward Tayler, "'Art imitates Nature, and Nature is the Art of God'" (17), and thus claims that art is "an integral part of paradisal bliss" (18).

God formed the earth and created, "Cedar, and Pine, and Fir, and branching Palm, / A Sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend / Shade above shade, a woody Theatre / Of stateliest view" (4.139-142). There are "Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm, / Others whose fruit burnish't with Golden Rind / Hung amiable" (4.248-250). God also "caused to grow / All Trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste; / ....Flow'rs of all hue, and without Thorn, the Rose" (4.217, 218, 256). In Eden, "universal *Pan* / Knit with the *Graces* and the *Hours* in dance / Led on Eternal Spring" (4.266-268). The creation of Eden, divinely wrought, is the highest form of artistic creation, and Milton only attempts to describe this "country whereof here need not account, / But rather to tell, *if* Art could tell" (4.235, 236 *italics mine*). Milton is stressing the comparison between the creation of art and the creation of Eden because the act of creating is essential to Adam and Eve's purpose in the

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[27] A statement made by writer and artist Julia Cameron fits well here: "Those who speak in spiritual terms routinely refer to God as the creator but seldom see creator as a literal term for artist" (2).

[28] Gulden also points in the "postlapsarian state, art is not nature" (17). Art is merely an attempt to imitate nature—the "true product of God's Creation" (17). As a result, art can be a faulty reproduction, ambiguous and deceptive. Thus Milton often uses the term art to describe the actions of Satan and the fallen angels (17).

Garden. As the highest form of created art Eden is not what Milton's Renaissance readers would consider perfection. Rather, as Milton suggests artistic perfection can be chaotic, profuse, excessive and wild:

> How from that Sapphire Fount the crisp'd Brooks,
> Rollling on Orient Pearl and sands of Gold,
> With mazy error under pendant shade
> Ran Nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
> Flow'rs worthy of Paradise, which not *nice* Art
> In beds of curious Knots, but Nature boon
> Poured forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plain,
> Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
> The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
> Imbrown'd the noontide Bow'r.
>
> (4.437-247 *italics mine)*

Since Eden embodies the most natural and most essential components of creation it is not stylized or manicured—the gardens are not knotted, but run wild and profuse because of its chaotic organization. Yet, chaotic organization is not hostile to art, but represents, rather, the true form of nature. Ornament represses earth's natural tendencies thus complicating the ability to see reality. Karen Edwards points out, "The difference between a knot and a *parterre de broderie* [a newer style of seventeenth century garden], is the difference between strict, often geometrical, precision and freer, abstract floral forms" (166), suggesting that Milton's Eden grows in the manner of the *parterre de broderie.* As Barbara K. Lewalski states, Eden is "Art perfectly fused with Nature" (*Innocence* 91), maintaining the ultimate essence of artistic creation and divine perfection while at the same time containing the most natural elements of physical matter. As Nick Pici explains, "Milton heads towards a less hierarchical understanding of nature" (44) by breaking down traditional Renaissance values of "uniformity, order and control in their garden spaces to construct a garden of relative freedom, unrestraint, and biological complexity" (44). Likewise, Donald Friedman explains,

> the formal, symbolic and even mathematical Elizabethan garden…[was] being replaced by gardens that were designed to subject an observer to a series of perspective views while moving through walks and avenues that led to 'discoveries'….it presents the observer with the necessity of choice.
>
> (125)

Lewalski continues to discuss this earthly paradise and explains that in comparison to the "Happy Garden in classical myth and the Earthly Paradise in Christian poetry and biblical exegesis" (88), Milton's Eden, while sharing similar pastoral qualities differs greatly in some respects. The former gardens are "sensuous, pastoral, inaccessible…have a perfect climate, perpetual springtime…flora grow[s] in vast but ordered profusion, the trees bear golden fruit, and there are no noxious plants or savage animals…. [humankind] is in complete harmony with Nature" (88) because the garden gives to humankind without requiring care.[29] On the other hand, Milton's Eden, "has most of the expected beauties and delights.... [but] has a surprising tendency to excess and disorder to overprofuseness and languid softness—the 'mazy error' of the brooks, the 'wanton' fertility of the vegetation, the 'luxuriant' vines, the 'pendant shades" (89-90). Milton's Eden needs care. It requires tending because it has a tendency to chaos—and yet its tendency for chaos is the very medium by which creativity can happen. The Garden contains the potential for growth and perfection, but it must be tended to. As Lewalski states, "everything has a tendency to regress to the chaotic state unless continually acted upon by a creative force akin to the divine creative power that first brought order out of chaos"(91). Milton compares Eden to an artistic process not only to impart to the reader the beauty and magnificence of the divine but to stress the need for the creative process—that which Eden requires from Adam and Eve in order for both humans and nature to obtain perfection. Lewalski continues to demonstrate the connection between the creation of Eden and creativity itself:

> In the beginning God created places suitable for the various orders of being; his creative act was immediate and instantaneous but is realized as a process, as a continuing creative activity with the inhabitants of each place imitate according to their measure, and in which they actively participate.
>
> (90)

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[29] I think that Lewalski means inaccessibility in terms of an actualizing possibility. The other gardens are inaccessible in terms of humankind relating to them. Milton's garden, although innocent, is imaginable to the reader because it requires tending.

Absolutely crucial to their life in Eden, Adam and Eve must learn to develop their own creative abilities by participating in Edenic natural life. Milton's Eden—the model through which Adam and Eve are to explore potential creativity—is in itself a constant creative process. Milton's description of Eden in Book 4 is full of the movement of rivers (223, 233), "fertile ground" (217), moulded mountains (226) and "shaggy hill(s)" (224) specifically created, remarks a jealous Satan, "To all delight of human sense" (206). Yet Eden is not created only for human enjoyment. God directs Adam and Eve to Eden with purpose, commanding them to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth / Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold" (7.531, 532) and giving them "This Paradise...count it thine / To Till and keep, and of the Fruit to eat "(8.319, 320). Milton's God also directs Adam and Eve to possess the entire earth "as Lords" (8.340). All these directions from God to Adam and Eve are instructions on how to relate to the earth as humans; directions which imply action and give Adam and Eve the foundation for developing their creative potential. As Theis states, "Adam and Eve successfully read the book of nature through their labour and transform this knowledge into art" (72). The development of this creative potential is part of the reciprocal relationship that Adam and Eve have with the earth. While they are given the earth to use, the earth gives them what they need—not only in sustenance and shelter—but in providing a medium for their creative potential. Furthermore, McColley explains,

> Milton so cultivates the sense of organic process, of mimeses, and of the interinanimation of nature and grace emergent in the liveliest Renaissance and Reformation thought, that his fit audience might see in the handiwork of Adam and Eve the cultivation of 'all kinde of seedes and grafts of life, 'as they integrate the contemplation of God's ways and the imitation of them and thus nurture the divine image of themselves and each other through providential and creative acts.
>
> (*Milton's Eve* 119)

Thus, as Adam and Eve read "the book of Nature", so Milton's own work becomes "the book of Nature" for his readers, exemplifying an active and creative life that fully integrates both their physical and spiritual homes.

The Establishment of an Environmental Ethic

Through the portrayal of Adam and Eve's interdependent, purposeful and progressive relationship with the earth Milton establishes an environmental ethic which essentially demonstrates Adam and Eve's personal ethic toward each other. Theis explains that his type of ethic concentrates on the interaction between humankind and the natural world creating a "dialectic between action and reflection" (61); thus, humankind interacts with the natural world as well as reflects upon the meaning of this interaction, enabling humankind to contemplate what it means to be human. Adam and Eve interact through gardening and preservation and reflect in song and prayer. Theis suggests one finds in *Paradise Lost* "a unified poetic treatise on a divine environmental ethic in which nature is the medium through which people worship and struggle to know God" (62), and in turn learn to know themselves. As stated earlier, all elements of nature are in an active state of being and are not fixed in one position, but contain the potential to move within the hierarchical scale. All matter tends towards perfection, but if not tended to, will incline towards chaos. Milton describes Adam and Eve's relationship to the earth through an environmental ethic which demands Adam and Eve+ take responsibility for their earthly surroundings. Adam and Eve's tending of the earth is a concrete model for their relationship with each other: an extension of the environmental ethic to include relationships between humankind as well as the physical earth. The reciprocal relationship which Adam and Eve enact in the garden is a mirror for their own ethical relationship to each other and to God.

Inevitably Eve's commonly perceived subordination to Adam raises some questions in terms of Milton's environmental ethic and the fluctuating nature of Milton's earthly universe. Milton's alteration of Thomistic hierarchy into an active ontological hierarchy that subverts power within the relationship between all matter and breaks down the boundaries between humankind and their environment is fundamental in understanding how the relationship between Adam and Eve is not one of full subordination, but rather, is developed on the foundation of chaos, flux and the tendency for all matter to incline to perfection.

Ecological Contextualization: Eve and the Search for Self-Identity

> *At the center of his epic, Milton set a richly imagined representation of prelapsarian love, marriage and domestic society. It is a brilliant though sometimes conflicted representation, in which Milton's internalization of contemporary assumptions about gender hierarchy, his idealistic view of companionate marriage, his own life experiences, and his deeply felt emotional needs sometimes strain against each other. Most profoundly, he explores through Adam and Eve the fundamental challenge of any love relationship: the uneasy, inevitable, and ultimately creative tension between autonomy and interdependence.*
>
> Barbara K. Lewalski *The Life of John Milton 479*

Feminist scholarship on Milton's *Paradise Lost* repeatedly locates Eve within the traditional role of a woman caught (willingly or coerced) in a patriarchical paradigm. Eve is read both as a sexual predator who prevents man from becoming closer to God and/or as the mother of humankind whose role is exclusively to recreate the human species. This reading places Eve as a malevolent feminine subordinate to Adam, who, as the head of the human race, is the intellectual and spiritual superior. Scholars such as Marcia Landy and Sandra Gilbert portray Eve as "a submissive and dependent housewife relegated to domestic tasks and valued chiefly for her procreative role" (*Milton on Women—Yet Once More* 4).[30] Diane McColley explains as well that many traditional interpretations of Genesis depict Eve as "weak, vain, useless, mindless, trifling, grasping, vacillating, wanton, obstinate, presumptuous, and fatally seductive"(*Milton's Eve* 1,2), which results in "seducing man as soul, reason, spiritual value, and contemplation from his proper relation to God"(11). More recently, Janet E. Halley claims that Milton's Eve still remains essentially, if not willingly, subordinate to Adam and necessarily defined by him[31] and Mary Nyquist maintains that Eve's autonomy is illusory. As Nyquist states, "inhabiting a world *appearing* to be her own would nevertheless seem to be the condition of the subjectivity of Eve" (120 *italics mine*).

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[30] Marcia Landy, "Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost," *Milton Studies* 4 (1972): 3-18; Marica Landy, "'A Free and Open Encounter': Milton and the Modern Reader". *Milton Studies* 9 (1976): 3-36; Sandra Gilbert, "Patriarchical Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections of Milton's Bogey," *PMLA* 63 (1978): 368-382.

To claim Milton is a feminist, like labelling him an environmentalist, is absurd. Yet, while locating an environmental ethic within *Paradise Lost* is, as shown, unproblematic, proposing a definite feminist theory within the text is not. In terms of assumptions concerning gender roles Milton is a product of his time and an honest reading of the poem will uncover many details and citations which inevitably locate Eve in a traditional female position. And, in the wider scope of Milton's works, on many different and complex levels, patriarchical hegemony informs and dominates Milton's philosophies.[32] However, this fact is not to deter the proposal that Eve is, in a particular context, a human being who is not only capable of making her own decisions but is, as well, responsible for making them. The dynamics of Eden—chaotic and fluid—inform Milton's representation of Eve and place her in a hierarchy that necessitates her own active involvement through active recreation.

While acknowledging Milton's socio-cultural position regarding gender hierarchy, many critics observe an intentional radicalism in Milton's characterization of Eve. Initially put forward by Barbara K. Lewalski[33], critics such as Joan Webber, Joseph Wittreich, Susanne Woods, John Rumrich and Diane McColley agree that Milton's portrayal of Eve is one of strength, independence and equality with Adam.[34] Throughout all her work Diane McColley maintains that Milton's "regard for the quality of human beings of both sexes offers more toward mutual respect than the problem of equality can undo....His loving portrait of Eve...raises her immeasurably above other Eves of art and story, opening new possibilities of dialogue for reading the family" (*Milton and the Sexes* 149, 164). Similarly, she states, "I believe that the readings of *Paradise Lost* in which Eve appears to be inclined toward sin before the Fall have been coloured by expectations that Milton hoped to reform, and that his portrayal of her stands in radiant contrast to the sly or naïve temptress who bore her name in the works of Milton's predecessors and contemporaries" (*Milton's Eve* 3, 4). McColley points out, "Milton brings traditional subordinates far closer than usual to their 'traditional' superiors and also gives them areas of superiority....despite contrary passages, Adam and Eve are so nearly equal that readers can argue about whether Milton thinks equality is or should be a principle of paradisal life" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 238). In fact, when reading Milton's initial description of Adam and Eve *through the eyes of Satan* where the couple "In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all. / And worthy seem'd...in thir looks Divine" (4.291, 292) and "Not equal, as thir sex not equal seem'd" (4.296), Michael Wilding avers

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[31] Janet E. Halley, "Female Autonomy in Milton's Sexual Poetics" Milton and the Idea of Woman Julia M. Walker, ed. (Urbana: UIP, 1988) 230-253.

[32] On this issue Susanne Woods states, "Though not a misogynist, Milton is backed into his century's assumptions of women's inferior position in the human paradigm"(16); Joseph Wittreich states, "Given the epic pretensions of *Paradise Lost*, it is no surprise to find patriarchical or misogynist attitudes. They are staples of the militantly masculine world of epic poetry; part of the epic formula, they are Milton's bogie, as much a bugbear to him as to his later female readership. They are a mode of contrivance for moving, or in the case of Milton, moving beyond, something" (101).

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[33] Lewalski states, "Milton of course accepted the categories of hierarchy and the natural inferiority of women, yet his reworking of the Adam and Eve myth has explored with remarkable incisiveness and profundity a basic human predicament. Each character is shown to bear full individual responsibility for his or her own choices, his or her own growth, his or her own contribution to the preservation and perfecting of the human environment; but at the same time, each experiences the depths of his soul, the need for the other, the inescapable bond of human interdependence....despite Milton's acceptance of the commonplace of female subordination in the natural hierarchy, he did not make women either sex objects or mother figures" (*On Women* 5, 11).

[34] Webber explains, "Milton's sense of direction in which humanity has to move is generally one which prepares the way for feminist thinking. When he did raise issues involving women's importance and rights, he was awkwardly and imperfectly breaking ground" (5, 6). Wittreich states, "Harboured within Milton's realistic portrait, the defects of which are finally those of *human* nature, is an idealism allowing for and honouring sexual difference, potentially for self-improvement, and certain attitudes of character worthy of general admiration and emulation....In speech after speech the clichés of Christianity are embedded so that they may be challenged. Particularly in its representation of the relations between the sexes, *Paradise Lost* is riddled with contradictions carefully planted within the text of the poem that are evidence of sophisticated strategy, not defective artistry" (85). Woods claims, "Milton's fundamental devotion to religious, civil, and domestic liberty is the cornerstone of his life and art. He has thought long and hard about freedom and is comfortable expounding his views in both prose and verse. He seems less at ease engaging these ideas when the rational creature he is concerned with is female. Far from being a misogynist, Milton was ahead of his time in granting to women a dignity and responsibility rarely conceded in the seventeenth century" (15). Rumrich states, "When we recall the spiritual import that Milton the divorcer assigns to Adam's loneliness, it seems clear that the poet was not merely mythmaking, but genuinely thought of the female side of humanity as a separate, complementary version of human being....She is not a failed copy of the masculine ideal, lacking in heat sufficient to attain the male form" (Milton Unbound 110).

> The vision of an inegalitarian, hierarchical, and absolutist paradise, then, we can interpret as a Satanic vision....The perceived unequal relationships are not the ideal but proleptic of the postlapsarian human condition. The seeming inequality, the seeming lordship, the declared absolution, the implied subjection—these are from hell....But the true paradise is to be deduced from the opposite of Satan's vision.
>
> (175)

Like many critics, Wilding observes a marked radicalism in Milton's poem albeit with much concern and indirectness for a man who wrote under censorship.

Lewalski explains that "though perceived as Adam's hierarchical inferior Eve is not relegated to the domestic sphere, nor her creativity confined to her maternal role; rather she…shares and participates in the full range of human activities and achievements" (*On Women* 8,9). In terms of their human ontology, Adam and Eve are created equally and function similarly within the Miltonic universe: both Adam and Eve contain equal potential to advance in their perfection. Milton does not include Eve in the text merely because it is part of the biblical story. And as his original source gives nothing as to Adam and Eve's characters before the Fall, except for God's purpose for them, his characterizations of Adam and Eve are innovative, revolutionary and deliberate. Instead of creating Eve in an emblematic female role, he chooses to create her as a whole human being who is as essential and interdependent within her universe as Adam.

Therefore, viewing the gender roles within a larger ecocritical context refocuses Milton's seemingly patriarchical vision of the dichotomy of the sexes. By coming to the text with a clear understanding of the fluidity between the boundaries between matter and spirituality, by understanding that all relationships are reciprocal, and by valuing the interdependent relationship that both Adam and Eve share with their environment, Eve's empowerment within the text can be reconsidered. Alternatively, removed from her ecological context, Eve is easily read as the angel or the whore.

The ontological hierarchy of perfection provides an opening in which to locate Eve's reciprocal relationship with her environment. Through his monist concept of the universe Milton demonstrates that humankind's relationship to the earth is fundamentally reciprocal, thus necessitating that Eve and Adam, as human beings, are created equal. Their equality is possible because Milton transforms all relationships of aggressive power and dominance to ethical responsibility. Obviously, as stated earlier, there are a few instances where this equality is not as apparent. The scene of Eve's origin and the scene of Adam and Eve's separation tend to problematize the argument of Eve's empowerment. Therefore, it is important to accentuate the environmental context out of which Adam and Eve are working to establish the equality that forms their ontological being before considering the circumstances of those particular scenes.

As stated earlier, Adam and Eve have a direct connection to the earth through the original act of their creations. They are connected to nature through the dust of the earth and the flesh of humankind. At the same time, since all matter moves both to God and from God, the dust and flesh which connect Adam and Eve to the physical earth necessarily connects them to the divine. The vital spirit of the divine flows from the base matter to the more spiritual matter, and the boundaries between the earth, humankind and the celestial are fluid and fluctuating allowing for movement and development of earthly matter. Milton's ecological ethic—to responsibly enact a reciprocal relationship with the earth for both the earth and humankind's preservation—enables Adam and Eve to develop ontological awareness and spiritual perfection. Milton's ecological ethic is a poetic embodiment of humankind's inexorable connection to the divinely infused physical earth and the responsibility humankind has towards this earth.

Within this context of ecological connection, flux, development and preservation it is possible to read Eve in a manner which avoids strict subordination and inferiority to Adam and rather as an individual being with the human potential to activate her spiritual perfection who makes legitimate and serious choices concerning her livelihood.

Connection to the Garden

> *We know much about what disembedding means in terms of identities and social relationships, but the concept has a lot of analytical potential still to be explored in relation to problems of ecology and sustainability. The challenge for a monistic, post-Cartesian human ecology is to develop perspectives that humanize nature and naturalize society in the same move. The concept of ecological embeddedness suggests a promising avenue in that direction.*
>
> *Alf Hornborg 93*

Milton's foundation for Adam and Eve's connection to the earth is emphasised in their creation out of the earth and the immediate placement within the earth. In his narrative of creation Raphael describes their initial origin (although here he specifically concentrates on Adam) in the larger context of ruling "over all the Earth" (7.521). Adam, Raphael describes, is formed out of the "Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils" (7.525) God "breath'd / The breath of Life" (5.525, 526). Adam's origin out of the earth immediately roots him within the flux of earthly matter. Simultaneously, Adam is also rooted in heaven, having had the breath of God originate life within him. Milton emphasises humankind's origin out of the extremes of the universal spectrum: Adam is both of the earth and of the heavens. Out of the dust of the ground Adam is created "in the image of God / Express" (5.527-528). To emphasise Adam and Eve's placement within and inextricable connection to the physical context of Eden Raphael tells Adam and Eve how God "brought thee into this delicious Grove, / This Garden, planted with the Trees of God, / Delectable both to behold and taste" (7.537-539). Then, with warning of the infamous tree, God, "finish'd…and all that he had made / View'd, and behold all was entirely good" (7.548-549). Milton's narration of Adam and Eve's creation is thoroughly founded in the matter which constitutes the physical earth as well as in the spirit of God and the make-up of the heavenly universe. By embodying both physical and spiritual components of the world Adam and Eve are intensely grounded in the earth that is below them and the heavens that are above them. Adam reiterates this connection later in Book 8 when he describes to Raphael his memory of his waking moment:

> As new wak't from soundest sleep
> Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid
> In Balmy Sweat, which with his Beams the Sun
> Soon dri'd, and on the reeking moisture fed.
> Straight toward Heaven my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd,
> And gaz'd awhile the ample Sky, till rais'd
> By quick instinctive motion I sprung,
> And thitherward endeavouring, and upright
> Stood on my feet; about me round I saw
> Hill, Dale, and Shady Woods, and sunny Plains,
> And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,

> Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd and walk'd or flew,
>
> (8.253-264)

With his eyes first on heaven Adam instinctively draws a connection to the earthly environment and describes that his "heart o'erflow'd" (8.266) with joy. In response, he physically enacts this joy and his intense grounding in the earth: "My self I then perus'd, and Limb by Limb / Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran / With supple joints, as lively vigour led" (8.267-269). Adam becomes self-aware of his body and his humanity amidst his environment, an allusion to the gradation of matter from dust to flesh to an awareness of the body in the body of the earth. This bodily reaction to Eden is an example of the intense relationship that Adam shares with the earth. Adam's narrative continues to describe God's familiar commands of earthly care and warnings of the sacred tree and Adam's first responsibility to the earth—the naming of the animals.

While the concentration within the two accounts of the origin of humankind is largely on Adam, Eve is, albeit generally rather than specifically, included in these accounts. The first account includes Eve in the general act of creation: "Let us make now Man in our image, Man in our similitude, and let *them* rule" (7.519-520 *italics mine*) giving equal responsibility to both Adam and Eve. Raphael's only distinction between the sexes: "Male he created thee, but thy consort / Female for Race" (7.529-530) is narrated almost as if it were a side note to clear up any confusion they might have about their differences rather than an imperative statement about gender roles. This line also functions to draw out the nearly invisible Eve and include her in the blessing to "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth / Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold" (7.531-532). Drawing from the first chapter of Genesis, Milton alludes to the divinity of humankind, stressing God's role as creator and demonstrating that "humankind may be more perfect than the rest of nature"(Theis 64). Here, "God created man in his own image" (*Gen.* 1:27). In effect, Milton allows the first chapter of Genesis to refer to humankind's providential journey on earth, thus implying that Eve shares with Adam a responsible and intense relationship to the earth as well as a spiritual connection to the celestial universe. The second chapter of Genesis, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (*Gen.* 2:7), stresses "our ancestry from the earth [and] places us in harmony with it, not in opposition to it" (Theis 64), and allows Milton a dialogue established on the humanity of Adam and Eve. Thus through his exegesis not only does Milton stress both the divinity of humankind and their integration with the earth, he establishes a foundation for theodicy.

Adam describes his version of Eve's origin in his own account to Raphael. (At this point, unlike the first narrative, Eve is not present in the conversation but has left to tend her gardens). Adam's account of Eve's origin, like both his and Raphael's description of his own origin, is intensely grounded in earthly matter as well as in heavenly formation. The earthly matter in which Adam bases Eve's origin is his own rib. Milton emphasizes the physicality of this process with detailed description: God "stooping op'n'd [Adam's] left side, and took / From thence a Rib, with cordial spirits warm, / And Life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound" (8.465-467). Out of the most earthly part of Adam's humanity—flesh, blood and bone—is Eve created. Immediately the wound is healed and "suddenly with flesh Filled up" (8.468); earthly matter is influenced by the divine and thus supernaturally heals itself. God then takes this rib and "fashion'd with his hands; / Under his forming hands a Creature grew / [hu]Manlike, but different sex" (8.469-471). Like the healing of Adam's wound, Eve is supernaturally formed by the influence of the divine. Instantly the connection between heaven and earth is made. Thus according to the account by Adam, Eve is both fundamentally of the earth and influenced by the divine, and as grounded in both environments as Adam. And although it seems that Eve is one degree less of the earth because she was created from rib and not dust, it is important to note that this is solely Adam's account. Milton dispels such thoughts when he allows Eve to speak of her origin.

Adam and Eve's reaction to their humanity—being fully connected to both the earth and heaven—is to celebrate physically through sexual intercourse. Milton accordingly emphasises this intense relationship between the earth, humankind and the divine heavens by having the universe react to their celebration:

> all Heav'n,
> And happy Constellations on that hour

Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Airs
Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
Flung Rose, flung Odors from the spicy Shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Evening Star
On his Hilltop, to light the bridal Lamp.

(8.511-520)

The natural earth—stars, wind, birds—sing of Adam and Eve's creation as beings innately connected to both the earth and the divine. Their marriage epitomizes the connection by emphasising reciprocity—first with each other and then towards their surroundings. Ultimately, Milton locates Adam and Eve as an integral part of both the earthly and heavenly landscape—both having been created out of the basest matter of the earth and infused with the most divine spirit of the heavens.

So far both accounts of Adam and Eve's origin discussed are from Raphael and Adam's narrative perspectives, respectively. Both accounts, while including Eve, tend toward the traditional, or biblical, account in terms of Eve's origin—that is, the extraction of the rib and the role of procreator. Yet, as evidenced throughout *Paradise Lost,* Milton tends to expand upon and revolutionize much of the commonly accepted narratives concerning the Genesis myth. Milton goes further than the biblical story in terms of Eve's origin by giving her own scene of origin in Book 4, one that does not include any mention of Adam's rib. It is my contention that Milton is counteracting Adam's account and in doing so suggests disparity in the biblical account.

Although this scene is often considered in terms of Eve's autonomy, a reading of the mirror-pool from an ecocritical position looks less at Eve's inexperience, moment of self-awareness and choice to join Adam, and more at the whole experience and the necessity of establishing a relationship with both the earth and with Adam. In many respects, the mirror-pool itself is another example of the ontological state of Eden—a shorter version of Raphael's tree. Eve narrates: "I first awak't, and found myself repos'd / Under a shade of flow'rs, much wond'ring where / And what I was, whence thither brought, and how" (4.450-452). She follows a stream which runs out of a cave until she comes to a still lake that reflects the sky. Through Eve's eyes the reader is immersed "Into a liquid Plain then stood unmov'd / Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n" (4.455-456): an illustration of either ends of the universe—earthly matter and spiritual matter—conflated into one source. When Eve looks into the heavenly water she finds another human being within this natural pond and her desire is to return to this image that is perfectly centered between heaven and earth. This desire is an indication of her instinct to ecology; an immediate recognition of humankind's innate and intentional positioning between heaven and earth.

Eve's self-awareness, like Adam's self-perusal, is embedded in this ecological context of natural, human and heavenly connection. As Ken Hiltner suggests, "Eve (as well as Adam) is not merely rooted in the earth, but also has celestial awareness, as Creation in general is figured as a plant rooted in the Earth that is also rising to Heaven" (72). The importance then, of this scene, is that the images in the mirror-pool represent the reciprocal relationships which Adam and Eve must create and maintain in Eden. Eve is warned not because the image is a dangerous obsession, but because she must activate the metaphor through her relationship with Adam, the earth and God. Through the mirror pool Eve gains awareness of herself as a human as well as her connection with the terrestrial and celestial universe. The image which Eve encounters represents the relationship which both Adam and Eve are to have towards each other and the earth. Eve is to treat all relationships with sympathy and love as her own reciprocal image "with answering looks" (4.464) responded. Eve is immersed in her universe from her beginning and is responsible for enacting a way of life that develops reciprocal relationships. Eve's narration continues, and parallel to Adam's account of origin, Adam and Eve join in physical celebration of their humanity "With kisses pure" (4.502). The description of Eve's origin demonstrates Eve's centeredness within both nature and heaven. Far from being destructive, her obsession with the pool teaches her the necessity for interconnectedness with both the earth and heaven. *In potentia* Eve encounters her own ability to create and recreate her connection to both Adam and God through her ecological surroundings. Milton places Eve in an ecological context from the beginning not only by reflecting heaven out the earth, but by situating humankind's connection with each other in the center of this reflection.

The connection which Adam and Eve have to all matter, both physical and spiritual, demonstrated through the narratives of their origins, is made formal by God's blessing and command to "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth / Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold / Over Fish of the Sea, and Fowl of the Air / And every living thing that moves on the Earth" (7.531-534). They are to rule the earth by nurturing it, reforming its chaotic tendency to grow wild. As human beings they are part of their own landscape and to reject their responsibility or ignore the intensity of the relationship to the earth is to reject their connection to the divine.

As stated earlier, the act of gardening establishes a connection between humankind and nature. And while Adam and Eve are innately connected, as Milton illustrates through their scenes of origin, they must constantly re-establish, or recreate this connection through the act of gardening. According to Lewalski, Milton places Adam and Eve as active and equal participants in the Garden of Eden. Their purpose is not solely to serve God, but to serve each other as well as to serve the creation that has been given to them. Lewalski maintains that "as images of God, Adam and Eve are also gardeners, responsible for the world that was made for them by the 'sovran Planter'" (*Innocence* 90). As gardeners they must actively concentrate on the state of the Garden, preserving "the Garden from wildness and excess by pruning and cutting and by plucking the fruits, restrictive actions that at the same time stimulate greater fertility" (92). Adam relates to Eve the tasks which lay before them illustrating their responsibility:

> Tomorrow ere fresh Morning streak the East
> With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
> And at our pleasant labour, to reform
> Yon flow'ry Arbors, yonder Alleys green,
> Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
> That mock our scant manuring, and require
> More hands than ours to lop thir wanton growth:
> Those Blossoms also, and those dropping Gums,
> That lie bestrown unsightly and unsmooth,
> Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
>
> (4.623-633)

In essence they are practicing an environmental ethic upon the earth to which they are wholly connected. Milton's demonstration of this connection manifests itself in two prominent ways: first through their vocal praise of creation, and second, through the nourishment attained through the physical earth.

Adam and Eve's vocal praise of creation is directly connected to their physical labour and Adam reiterates this sentiment, suggesting to Eve that they, "ever praise him, and extol / His bounty, following our delightful task / To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs" (4.436-438). Here, praise follows their labour. Praise also precedes their labour as illustrated in their morning prayer in Book 5 when Adam and Eve recognise that all elements of creation exist "In honour to the World's great Author" (5.188) Yet not only does this morning prayer spiritually connect them with the earth, but it also gives them strength to continue with their work because it comes as a reaction to Eve's dream. This morning song allows them to recover the "Firm peace…and wonted calm" (5.210) that seemed absent when they first awoke. Adam also describes to Eve that even when they are sleeping the angels wander the earth praising God:

> how often from the steep
> Of echoing Hill or Thicket have we heard
> Celestial voices to the midnight air
> Sole, or responsive each other's note
> Singing thir great Creator: oft in bands
> While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
> With Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds
> In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
> Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.
>
> (4.680-688)

In this respect, Adam and Eve are continuously connected to the earth. Not only does their labour inspire them to praise, they praise because they need inspiration to labour. Furthermore, this connection between the physical and spiritual nature of earth is intensified by the fact that nature continues to praise while they are asleep. Diane McColley suggests that through hymns

Adam and Eve are practicing ecological consciousness: "a connected way of thinking about the diverse world" (*Ethic* 66).

Another way in which Milton emphasizes Adam and Eve's connection to the earth is through the act of taking nourishment. Gathering from nature's "fertile growth" (5.319) which "by disburd'ning grows / More fruitful "(5.319, 320) Eve prepares "For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please / True appetite" (5.304, 305), and Adam invites Raphael, to taste "These bounties which our Nourisher, from whom / All perfect good unmeasur'd out, descends / To us for food and for delight hath caus'd / The Earth to yield" (5.398-401). At first, although understanding "That one Celestial Father gives to all" (5.403), Adam is unaware of angelic biology and suggests that earthly food may be unsavoury to angels (5.401, 402). He is at once corrected by Raphael who states "food alike those pure / Intelligential substances require, / As doth your Rational" (5.407-409). Raphael continues to explain how all matter needs "To be sustain'd and fed" (5.415) and describes how all living matter from the basic elements of life to angelic beings needs sustenance. Adam's intuitive belief that all things come from God is further expanded through Raphael's arboreal metaphor of the universe as he describes how the root nourishes the stalk, the stalk the leaves and flowers, and from the flowers grow the fruit that nourishes humankind.

The hymns of praise and the act of taking nourishment not only illustrate Adam and Eve's connection to the earth but accentuate Milton's ontological hierarchy of perfection by diminishing the boundaries between humankind and the physical universe. As Stanton Linden explains, "one of the effects of the morning hymn of praise is to blur sharp boundaries between the celestial and terrestrial spheres which might otherwise prove inhibiting to the upward aspirations of Adam and Eve" (605). The joining in of all creation in song establishes the equality of all matter, disabling the possibility of a hierarchy of domination and facilitating the movement of all matter toward perfection. Linden also explains that the boundaries between the "seemingly opposing categories" (606) of base matter and humankind and humankind and the angels are reduced through Milton's explanation of all being's need for nourishment, showing the potential for Adam and Eve to move further in their spiritual perfection.

This seamless intermingling, the flux between the boundaries of all earthly matter including Adam and Eve, necessitates that their connection with the earth is not just physical. Through gardening Adam and Eve continuously recreate their relationship with the earth and in doing so, recreate their connection with the divine. Through this physical process they contemplate their humanity. Milton's ecological ethic is an ontological ethic as well. Milton's spiritual metaphor becomes clear: taking care of the garden is taking care of the soul. As Diane McColley explains,

> in *Paradise Lost* work is a form of love. It prompts awareness of the needs body, and provides understanding of the workings of nature and of the mind, limitless conversation and the abounding interest of

> cooperation within nature. Eden is profuse; but it needs human work to guard its beauty and keep it fruitful. The same is true of human souls.
>
> (*Gust* 188)[35]

The same process that applies to Milton's garden—creation out of chaos, the tendency of the garden to disorder but the potential and willingness of the garden to perfection—applies to the soul. The soul needs tending because it is prone to chaos, yet at the same time contains the potential to actively will itself to perfection. The less excessive or wild one's soul is the closer one becomes to God. All matter contains the potential to spiritual perfection—as expressed through the ontological hierarchy of perfection—and is motivated through the practice of the ecological ethic. Raphael's explanation of the ontological state of the universe, directed to *both* Adam and Eve, states that "Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit / Improv'd by tract of time" (5.498, 499). In this respect, Milton's view on women's spirituality is expressed: Eve contains the potential to become as close to God as Adam.

Milton's belief in the equality of women's spirituality is not astonishing considering his Protestant views on marriage. As Diane McColley explains, "modern readers have come to understand the Bible in the ways that divest it of antifeminine, rabbinical and patristic accretions, and this is the direction in which Milton, with his Reformation fervour for such divestment, is already moving" (*Milton's Eve* 35). She also explains that Milton did not "deny to women perfectibility in any spiritual or moral gifts; and he insisted on the spiritual compatibility of husband and wife" (Milton and the Sexes 149). Adam and Eve possess equal potential for spirituality as well as equal potential for establishing a marriage relationship.

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[35] McColley also expresses this in *Milton's Eve*, explaining, "Men and women are free to nurture the seeds and grafts of life within themselves by nurturing them in the rest of creation. Adam and Eve have within themselves the seeds of thought, art, moral wisdom, worship, and love. Like the surging fertility of the Garden, these potentialities—and especially that sensuous vitality represented in classical myth—need, as Eve recognizes and says, to be lopped, pruned, propped, and bound in order to bear wholesome fruit" (68).

Active and Interdependent Relationships

Like Adam and Eve's relationship to the constant growth of Eden and the necessity of tending it towards its natural perfection, their own relationship demands tending in order to develop its potential towards spiritual perfection. Rather than establishing a traditional gendered hierarchy, Milton allows both Adam and Eve, as beings who are both endowed with wisdom, equal opportunity for growth. Susanne Woods maintains that although Milton

> rejects the broader social hierarchy, he also allows some leeway in the gender hierarchy. Though the husband should ordinarily rule in a marriage (as Paul insists) Milton in *Tetrachordon* remarkably concedes that the wife in some marriages may have wisdom equal or greater than her husband's, and both should in that case yield to 'a superior and more natural law', which is that 'the wise should govern the less wise, whether male or female'".
>
> (19)

Milton's accommodation to this law is illustrated in *Paradise Lost* where he recognizes a postlapsarian state within a prelapsarian vision of marriage. In prelapsarian Eden, where neither Adam nor Eve is wiser than the other, Milton allows for equal discourse. The 'leeway' (read: equality through reciprocity) he allows in gender hierarchy in prelapsarian Eden should, he envisions, also manifest itself in the postlapsarian world by following the 'superior and more natural law' in light of humankind's fallen condition. Decisions are more difficult to make in the postlapsarian world because reciprocity is flawed.

By establishing equal spirituality between Adam and Eve Milton allows for an interdependent relationship rather than one of power and submission. Like Adam and Eve's relationship to the earth where dominion does not entail power but rather responsibility, Adam and Eve's relationship to each other is one of support and care. Marriage must grow like Eden where

> they led the Vine
> To wed her Elm; she spous'd about him twines
> Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
> Her dow'r the adopted Clusters to adorn
> His barren leaves
>
> (5.215-219)

Milton describes a marriage relationship that is interdependent—similar to Adam and Eve's relationship to the garden. As indicated by Milton, a man without a woman is barren; she brings life to the relationship. Conversely, a woman will have no place to blossom without her partner. It is important that in a marriage relationship one does not try to live as an autonomous being. A marriage relationship "requires human guidance in order to grow together. Through rational rule, both vine and elm become more productive" (*Mastership* 13). Milton stresses the importance of the marriage relationship to humankind, comparing it to the physical creation of the Garden of Eden.

Importantly embedded in these lines is the process of tending and cultivating the natural world. This passage is an emblem of marriage itself and Milton places it in the context of gardening. At this point Adam and Eve are actively tending the garden where chaotic nature is hard at work. Adam and Eve cut off branches of the "Fruit trees overwoody" (5.213) so fruit can grow and then move to wind the ivy around the elm trees. The decision to connect interdependently is an active one and is, for Milton, an analogy for human marriage where the relationship must be actively maintained in a manner where both individuals contribute different but equally important elements. In this respect, God's account of Eve as Adam's "likeness", "fit help" and "other self" (8.450) expresses Milton's belief in marriage as complementary and reciprocal relationship. Likewise, Adam's statement that a marriage relationship is "fellowship.../... fit to participate / All rational delight" (8.389, 390-391) suggests the basis of human relationships in "Collateral love, and dearest amity"(426).

There are a few instances where Adam and Eve exhibit difficulty in their conception of their relationship. When Eve first notices Adam she expresses her disappointment that he is "less fair / Less winning soft, less amiably mild / Than that smooth wat'ry image" (4.477-480) which she has been gazing on. And, as already stated, her scene of origin has immersed her in the knowledge of the need for reciprocal relationships, but she must learn to reciprocate with another human rather than an image. Adam's strangeness is complementary to their relationship and Eve's recognition that "beauty is excell'd by manly grace / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (4.490, 491) demonstrates her understanding of how all things are interconnected with each other. Eve is "[affirming] that those heavenly qualities of love (grace and wisdom) that she recognizes in Adam, excel the appeal of pure earthly beauty" (Revard 125). Beauty is problematic for Adam as well, sensing that God "took perhaps / More than enough; at least on her bestow'd / Too much of Ornament, in outward show" (8.536-538). Adam is insecure within their relationship, believing that because of her beauty "Wisdom in discourse with her / Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows" (8.552-553). John Rumrich suggests that Adam's concern with her beauty reflects the "problematic of incoherence and excess [derived] from the influence of chaos and applies not only to Eve, but is pervasive in Milton's cosmos, an expression of the nature of things...rather than evidence of a divine plot to ensnare humanity" (*Milton Unbound* 118) or, I would add, evidence of Eve's inability to converse. Raphael is quick to reprimand Adam stating that Eve is "worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love / Not thy subjection" (8.569-570) and "that with honour thou may'st love / Thy mate, who sees thee when thou art seen less wise" (8.577-578). Raphael then advises Adam on the difference between love and passion, explaining that "love refines / The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat / In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale / By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend" (8.589-592). Adam displays his understanding of Raphael's teaching, stating,

> Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
> In procreation common to all kinds
> (Though higher of the genial Bed by far,
> And with mysterious reverence I deem)
> So much delights me as those graceful acts,
> Those thousand decencies that daily flow
> From all her words and actions mixed with Love
> And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
> Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul;
> Harmony to behold in wedded pair
> More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
>
> (8.596-606)

Adam learns to differentiate between passion and love, accepting Eve's nature and valuing her contributions to their relationship. Love, as Adam learns, "Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide;" (8.613). Essentially love is, according to Milton, a state of being which enables Adam and Eve to access their potential perfection as well as respond to each other in their humanity: "if marriage is made possible when love makes its descent from heaven, it endures because the married lovers set their minds and hearts on that rational love that makes possible a heavenly reascent" (Revard 125).

Milton's concept of marriage in *Paradise Lost* is not merely an institutional concept, but a state of being which sustains the development of the soul. Adam and Eve's marriage is to be perfected in order that someday it will be fit for heaven. In caring for Eden, Adam and Eve are asked to be artists in their own lives so that one day they may be ready to enter heaven.

Adam and Eve's Education

Adam and Eve are partners within Eden, created by God in a creation where all matter is directed to perfection. In recognition of this perfection Adam says to Eve, "Sole partner, and sole part of all these joys, / Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power / That made us, and us for this ample World / Be infinitely good" (4.412-416). Like the physical Eden, Adam and Eve are part of the artistic medium of God, and have "natures capable of a prodigious growth of good things, but which require constant pruning to remove excessive or unsightly growth" (Innocence 94). The first occasion in which Adam and Eve are asked to recreate themselves is in Eve's interaction with Satan during her dream. Traditionally this dream is interpreted as a foreshadowing of the Fall, marking the initial appearance of sin and suggesting Eve as prefallen.[36] Satan, "Assaying by his Devilish art to reach /

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[36] Peter Fiore writes, "Concerning Eve's dream, Grant McColley interprets the incident as a fusion of the two traditional beliefs: one, that Adam fell on the first day of his creation; the other, that he fell on the eighth day. William B. Hunter sees it as a fusion of the patristic tradition which taught that the devil had great power over dreams and the Renaissance tradition which taught that dreams very often reveal externally an internal disorder. E.M.W. Tillyard, in line with A.J.A. Waldock's theory that Milton actually places the Fall much earlier in the epic....concludes that the dream has really touched Eve; and 'she has really passed from a state of innocence to one of sin'"(35, 36). Yet as Fiore rightly points out, with respect to Augustine theology, Milton does not insinuate Eve to be prefallen. Fiore writes, "No matter

The Organs of her Fancy, and with them forge / Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams" (4.802-804), causes Eve in her dream to walk to the "Tree / Of interdicted Knowledge" (5.51, 52). She encounters an angel who, gazing on the tree, turns to her, questions God's command, and eats the fruit. Eve describes this moment where "damp horror chill'd / At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold" (5.65, 66), but finds that she too "Could not but taste" (5.86), invited by the possibility of ascending to heaven like the angels. She thus flies up over the earth with the angel, but to her dismay he leaves her and she descends and falls asleep. At her waking she is disturbed by this dream and tells Adam who assures Eve that evil itself is not part of her being. Reason, Adam states, is the "chief" (5.102) of the mind, but in its absence fancy, or imagination, takes to "imitate her…misjoining shapes" (5.111) and "Ill matching words and deeds long past or late" (5.113). This dream requires pruning because it is chaotic, and Adam does just this by clarifying how imagination and reason must work together. Adam reassures Eve that because the mind is prone to "many lesser Faculties" (5.101) this dream is not of ill. Adam assures her that

> Evil into the mind of God or Man
> May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
> No spot or blame behind; Which gives me hope
> That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
> Waking thou will never consent to do.

---

how vivid and unholy the image may be, no matter how strong the inclination to transgress the law, no matter how vehement the sensation of the unlawful satisfaction—as long as there is no consent of the will, there is no sin" (36).

(5.117-212)

With this assurance Adam, with sympathy for Eve whose tears are "signs of sweet remorse" (5.134), suggests that they to their "fresh imployments rise / Among the Groves, the Fountains, and the Flowers" (5.125, 126) knowing that their labour will recover peace "and wonted calm" (5.210). Moreover, this dream is preceded by an allusion to the Song of Solomon. Adam wakes Eve before her narration, whispering, "My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found, / Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight" (5.18) invoking suggestions of perfect love, marriage and sensual delight. The garden of the Song of Solomon, implying the land of *Beulah*, or married land, describes the essence of Adam and Eve's prelapsarian marriage. This dream is Adam and Eve's first chance at learning how to apply knowledge, and they do so in a state of absolute assurance and perfection. As McColley states, "this central dream....is a crux that distinguishes Milton's version of Edenic human relations by making sorrow and perplexity materials for love and understanding even in prelapsarian life" (*Gust* 196). They have encountered conflict and apply their reason in order to manage it. In this case they carefully pruned and recreated their knowledge in reaction to chaos. Thus, without delay, "to the Field they haste" (5.136); Milton stresses the interconnectedness between the soul and the earth.

The scenes of their origin and the lesson of Eve's dream are the first stages of learning that Adam and Eve encounter in the garden. Having been created out of the very matter of the earth—dust and flesh—and being situated quite directly and centrally between the matter of earth and the matter of heaven, Adam and Eve instantaneously learn to connect with the earth, each other and with the divine. They respond with love-making and hymn-making, as well as with the "morning's rural work.../Among sweet dews and flow'rs" (5.211, 212); these things also impart to them aspects of their humanity. Yet with respect to Satan lurking around Eden this form of learning is not adequate. Therefore, God sends Raphael to "Converse with *Adam*, in what Bow'r or shade / Thou find'st him from the heat of Noon retir'd" (5.230, 231), and specifically directs Raphael to "advise him of his happy state" (5.234) because "Happiness in his power left free to will, / Left to his own free Will, his Will though free, / Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware / He swerve not too secure" (5.235-238). As Joan M. Webber maintains, "Eve and Adam were meant to move upward through the chain of being, free of death, until they reached the status of angels....Their destiny as free agents required them to be educated, and for this purpose God sent Raphael to them" (15). Raphael is to advise Adam, and presumably Eve as well, on free will and their precarious, or, chaotic situation in Eden. God also directs Raphael to

> tell him withal
> His danger, and from whom, what enemy
> Late fall'n himself from Heav'n is plotting now

> The fall of others from like state of bliss;
> By violence, no, for that shall be withstood,
> But by deceit and lies; this let him know,
> Lest wilfully transgressing he pretend
> Surprisal, unadmonish't, unforewarn'd.
>
> (5.238-245)

Through Raphael's warning of the danger of Satan, Adam and Eve are fully prepared to realize their need for active responsibility towards their position in Eden. Richard Strier suggests that Milton's conception of learning derives from Aristotle: "The goal of ethical life, for Aristotle, is not to make perfect choices but to become, through training, education, and moral experiences, the sort of creature who does not have to be constantly making moral choices" (191).

Raphael begins the lesson with the ontological tree analogy. Although not vocal, Eve is present during the conversation and "is thus as fully instructed as Adam is about the substance of the universe…and the curiously fluid conception of hierarchy this monism sustains" (*On Women* 6). She does not leave Adam and Raphael until later in Book 8.

The conversation which evolves throughout Books 5, 6 and 7 relates to Adam and Eve the nature and origin of the universe, the expulsion of Satan and his angels out of heaven and the creation of a new world. While this education is important to the well-being of Adam and Eve, Raphael is careful to impart only knowledge "which best may serve / To glorify the Maker"

(7.115, 116), explaining that his "Commission from above /…[is] to answer they desire / Of knowledge within bounds" (7.118-120). Raphael echoes this assertion later in conversation specifically with Adam:

> Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
> Leave them to God above, him serve and fear;
> Of other Creatures, as him pleases best,
> Wherever plac't, let him dispose: joy thou
> In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
> And thy fair *Eve*; Heav'n is for thee too high
> To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
> Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
> Dream not of other Worlds, what creatures there
> Live, in what state, condition or degree,
> Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd
> Not of Earth only but of highest Heav'n.
>
> (8.167-178)

Through this passage Milton establishes the earth as integral to Adam and Eve's being (assuming Adam will later relate this conversation to Eve intermixing "Grateful digressions…/ With conjugal Caresses" (8.55, 56)). Adam is not admonished because his questions are inappropriate, but because they are not grounded in the earth. Raphael does not blame Adam for asking questions about the movement of the heavens, yet states "the great Architect / Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge / His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought / Rather admire" (8.72-75). Instead of pondering things which are not relevant to Adam's existence on the earth he is encouraged to reflect and comprehend "only what concerns thee and thy being" (8.175). Raphael is insistent in conveying to Adam that "not to the earth are those bright Luminaries / Officious, but to...Earth's habitant" (8.98, 99), assuring Adam of his importance on the earth. At the same time he also assures him that "he dwells not in his own" (8.103). Raphael's intention is to impart to Adam the importance of focusing on the earth itself and humankind's relationship with it. Adam demonstrates his learning as he replies to Raphael that he now understands that it is most essential "to know / That which before us lies in daily life, / Is the prime Wisdom, what is more, is fume" (8.192-194). In light of this gained knowledge Adam turns the conversation to daily life—to his experience of his creation and his first encounter with Eve—questioning Raphael on various aspects of his emergent ontology. Milton's portrayal of Adam's self-awareness is fluid, as Lewalski explains, "primal [human] nature is shown to be complex and constantly developing, not simple and stable" (*Innocence* 100)[37]; Adam displays his ability to acquire knowledge and apply it by redirecting his questions concerning the higher heavens to more grounded questions concerning his own being. This assertion is resonant with Milton's universe of fluid matter—humankind possesses the ability to acquire and develop knowledge, illustrating the ability to actively adapt to their universe.

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[37] Lewalski expands this statement, suggesting that "each new situation in Milton's Eden is an opportunity to grow in wisdom, virtue, and perfection and normally Adam and Eve must take the initiative in interpreting what happens to them and in seeking new knowledge and experience....Adam and Eve's life in Eden, until the fateful marital dispute, describes a pattern, not of declining innocence but of steady growth toward a perfection through ever-increasing knowledge and experience" (*Innocence* 100).

What is fascinating about the whole of Book 8 is Eve's absence from this part of the conversation with Raphael. This passage is often read as Eve's inability to comprehend, or disinterest in, topics concerning the celestial beings, or as a narrative device to remove Eve so Adam can pose to Raphael his concerns about her overwhelming beauty.[38] Yet in light of Adam and Eve's awareness of their active role in the garden, this passage, in fact, demonstrates Eve's acute understanding of what it means to be human as imparted through her origin, experience and education. Milton narrates, "So spake our Sire, and by his count'nance seem'd / Entering on studious thoughts abstruse, which *Eve* / Perceiving where she sat retir'd in sight..../ Rose" (8.39-41, 44), qualifying these verses stating Eve "went...not, as not with such discourse / Delighted, or not capable her ear / Of what was high" (8.48-50) explaining that Eve would rather Adam tell her of the conversation later. Although some critics have focused on the "Grateful digressions" and "conjugal Caresses" (8.55, 56) of these lines claiming Eve as a dutiful, adoring wife, the importance of this passage is the lines in between: "and went forth among her Fruits and Flow'rs, / To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, / Her Nursery; they at her coming sprung / And touch't by her fair tendance gladier grew" (8.44-47). What occurs in these four lines is an active implementation of what Raphael will subsequently teach to Adam. As Joseph Wittreich explains, "Eve is already in possession of the lesson that Adam must learn; she knows when it is time 'to know no more', when to be lowly wise, as is made evident to Raphael at least by the adroit timing of her departure" (92). McColley echoes Wittreich stating, the "point that love and taking care of the earth are more important than intellectual speculation is exactly the lesson Raphael will ultimately draw from Adam's question.... After a hundred lines of astronomy, he tells Adam to do as Eve is already doing" (*Gust* 209). Rather than discuss the celestial movements Eve inclines herself towards the earth, fulfilling her role as caretaker. Her inclination to the earth illustrates her seamless connection to nature, and even the flowers "at her coming" (8.46) spring up and grow. Moreover, this inclination is not involuntary: at the point where Eve realizes that the conversation is not rooted in the earth or humankind's placement within the earth, she actively roots herself—demonstrating the necessity of tending and responding to her environment. As Donald Friedman claims, this demonstration shows that "Eve has acquired the practical knowledge appropriate to managing the actual affairs of their life in Eden" (129). Ann Gulden remarks that "When creating her garden, Eve builds on previous experience, developing earlier skills" (18). Eve's action is thus emphasised by Raphael's conversation with Adam, reiterating Milton's belief that humankind possess the ability to continuously develop their ontological awareness through their relationship with the earth and needs this capacity in order to work towards spiritual perfection.

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[38] Joan M. Webber suggests, "Both Eve and Adam listen and absorb all that Raphael has to tell them, understanding with equal aptitude, as Milton tells us. When Eve leaves before Raphael does, her departure serves several purposes, the most important of which is probably that it leaves Adam free to discuss her with the angel, in the section where he is told, but does not really admit, that he is an excessively doting husband"(15). Similarly, Lewalski explains, "In part she leaves for dramatic convenience so that Adam may discuss his marital problem with Raphael, and, as the poet insists, she will receive all the information later, from Adam's account. The prelapsarian educational curriculum, then, is precisely the same for the women as for the men—ontology, cosmology, metaphysics, moral philosophy, history, epic poetry, divine relation, physics and astronomy" (On Women 7).

This ability is Adam and Eve's ability to develop as artists, and Milton is suggesting to his readers a most important concept: creation of art is an integration of both intellectual study and creative labour. Milton avoids artistic dualism as he suggests a fully integrative, whole and regenerative creative process—art that flourishes out of monism. Adam and Eve's hymns, prayers, and poetry of praise are a result of education, creativity, and an intrinsic connection to a matter that holds both chaotic and recreative possibilities. Thus, the potential to perfection is not mere spirituality or moral goodness. Milton seeks to depict the first humans as creators of their own humanity—with the ability to develop it within the limits of their being. For Milton, Christianity is a process of constant recreation. Adam and Eve represent the fullness of this religious ethic, and are framed by the most natural, human, and divine environment God the creator gives them. Eden provides both the studio and medium of the ultimate creative endeavour.

At the end of Book 8 Raphael says to Adam, "But I can now no more; the parting Sun / Beyond the Earth's green cape and verdant isles / *Hesperian* sets, my signal to depart" (8.630-631), expressing that at present the education of Adam and Eve is sufficient. Raphael gives one more word of advice to Adam concerning both his and Eve's situation on earth:

> Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all
> Him whom to love is to obey, and keep

> His great command; take heed lest Passion sway
> Thy Judgement to do aught, which else free Will
> Would not admit;
> ....
>   stand fast; to stand or fall
> Free in thine own Arbitrament it lies.
> Perfect within, no outward aid require;
> And all temptation to transgress repel.
>
> (8.633-637, 640-653)

Although Adam and Eve's education is meant to continue as they work in the garden together, this formal part of their education is complete. They have been fully warned of the danger of sin and have been given the means by which they are to live. Unless their free will is compromised, there is nothing more the angels or God can do to divert their future actions but "in [their] persevering…rejoice" (8.639).

Nevertheless, though Adam and Eve are both innately linked to their environment and have received an equal education, many critics of *Paradise Lost* take issue with claims of Eve's equality and interdependence particularly in regards to two incidents where her ontological and educational competence seems less than sufficient. Critics have argued a connection between Eve's scene of origin at the lake and Eve's request to work on her own by postulating these events as statements about Eve's ego and her selfish and sinful need for autonomy, qualities that make Eve predisposed to and solely responsible for the Fall.

Creative Reproductions: Eve and the Mirror-Pool

Earlier I proposed reading Eve encounter at the mirror-pool in a much larger ecological context, maintaining Eve's role as interdependent and interconnected with the Edenic universe. Yet more common readings of this scene show Eve's self-obsession and vanity as evidence of her subordinate nature and her failure to resist Satan. Conventional theory claims that Eve's encounter with her image in the lake is narcissistic, a warning about the weakness of Eve who later, as all readers know, will commit the first sin. In developing this theory, Marshall Grossman proposes that "Milton's universe requires Eve's complicity in her own de-capitation. To fulfill Adam's need for conversation, she must remain an empty place in which he finds himself" (224). In return for deferring the "pleasure of her self-possession" (224), she receives the title of Mother and will be given many children. According to Grossman, Milton's universe is founded upon the "(re)production of the paternal image, the place on which and in which the father writes his name and reproduces his style" (240). Eve's narcissistic tendency—which Grossman sees as self-identity—is exchanged for the creative ability to reproduce.

The opinion that Eve is placed in Eden merely as a reproductive vessel, and that she must give up her self-identity in order to attain this role, is in contradiction with Milton's portrayal of Eve in Eden, as well as early Protestant marriage values—those which Milton upheld. Mary Nyquist[39] explains,

> That woman was created solely or even primarily for the purposes of procreation is the low-minded...opinion the Protestant doctrine of marriage sees itself called to overturn. Emphasizing, eloquently, the psychological needs sanctioned by the deity's words instituting marriage [Gen. 2:18], the Reformers enable an emerging bourgeois culture to produce what has the appearance at least of an egalitarian view of the marital relation.
>
> (103)

As stated earlier, Protestant reformers valued marriage relationships that emphasize an interdependent bond where each member has an equivalent amount of potential for establishing a connection with each other as well as with God.[40] The need for a spiritual relationship with God and a collaborative relationship with a partner precedes the physical function of procreation. Through both the mirror-pool and the separation scene Milton establishes Eve as a self-aware human who contains the potential to function adequately as a spiritual being within Eden's environment. Although Eve's procreative abilities are important, Milton does not highlight them until he first establishes her potential for perfection as a human being.

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[39] Unlike myself, Nyquist regards this scene as illusory and does not believe that Adam and Eve emulate an egalitarian marriage relationship.

[40] Susanne Woods maintains, "Adam may be for God only, and Eve for 'God in him', but she and Adam praise God directly together, and after the Fall, Eve is spoken to and responds directly to the Son, here certainly the voice of God whatever Milton's Arminianism" (18).

Barbara K. Lewalski claims that Eve is not obsessed with her own autonomy during the mirror-pool scene, nor is she giving up her self-identity when she yields to Adam. As Milton writes, Eve "thither went / With unexperienc't thought, and laid…down / On the green bank, to look into the clear / Smooth Lake" (4.456-459), suggesting Eve's newness to the situation and her inability to fully understand the shape that she sees. Milton does present Eve with "fixed" eyes and pining "with vain desire" (4.465, 466), but only because she finds her image "returned as soon with answering looks / Of sympathy and love" (4.464, 465) and it pleases her.

Alluding to Ovid's myth of *Echo and Narcissus*[41], Milton compares female Eve to the male Narcissus, applying his vanity to her recognition of her own creation.[42] While the original story describes the nymph's vanity as unrequited, tragic and displeasing, Eve's love for herself is comforting in light of her "unexperienc't thought" (4.457). At this point she does not fully understand the experience and as Peter Fiore explains,

> there is no reason to infer that Eve gave full deliberation or displayed an inordinate sense of vanity here. It must be remembered that Eve has just been created; she is less than a few hours old; she has never seen her own image or anyone else's.
>
> (37)

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[41] See Bullfinch's Mythology: The Age of Fable, the Age of Chivalry, Legends of Charlemagne Richard P. Martin ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1991).

[42] With regard to the male versus female characterization Michael Holahan states, "even though the figure is male, the myth can be used in denigration of a woman's capacity to see herself" (346) implying that used allegorically the myth focuses on vanity rather than gender.

Similarly Lewalski suggests while "her momentary turning back displays an impulse to vanity and self-centeredness grounded in an overvaluation of the beauty, softness, and mildness of the 'smooth, wat'ry image,' thus far [these are] the only human goods she understands" (*Innocence* 101). Eve's inclination to return to this goodness is evidence of the potential she contains to perfection. Eve's tendency to return is a tendency to will good. Eve does not vainly obsess with her image, but rather she recognizes its goodness and meets this goodness with a natural tendency to reciprocate. Since she knows nothing else and is created to will perfection she naturally turns toward this image. God then redirects her, explaining that "What there thou seest fair creature is thyself, / With thee it came and goes" (4.468-469). Eve then moves from the pool (not without contemplation of Adam's rough looks) and joins Adam.

Milton's allusion to the Narcissus myth is limited because, unlike Narcissus, Eve is able move out of this individualistic realm and into an environment where she is interdependent among other beings and interconnected with her earthly surroundings. Diane McColley avers,

> The lake of potential narcissism and the wandering streams that form it rightly suggest to the postlapsarian mind a warning against self-love and joint egoism…but in Paradise…the very quality of self-hood is yet to be investigated, the mirror is innocently held up to the sky as a potential instrument of growth.
>
> (*Milton's Eve* 79)

Her love with herself becomes requited when she is introduced to Adam because (although less fair) he reflects her humanity. Within this humanity Eve begins to understand her active role within the Miltonic universe. As Michael Holahan explains,

> We notice the mimicry of Ovid, and seeing how good Eve is at it we may be tempted to conclude that the vanity of human wishes arises from feminine vanity. But this judgement cannot be sustained. The fate of Narcissus precludes his own narration of this fate. Eve experiences the playful delights of narcissism and then goes beyond. She will care for the flowers rather than become one.
>
> (346)

Given that Milton's depicts both the terrestrial universe in hierarchical flux and matter as active and tending toward good it follows that he cannot allow Eve to remain in a narcissistic position. Eve contains the potential to activate her own perfection, and does so after "a voice thus warn'[d" (4.467) her by choosing to take her place within the universe. Through her self-awareness she learns to value beauty, softness and mildness and she enacts these qualities by tending the garden. Although Milton portrays both Adam and Eve as caretakers of the garden, he specifically cites Eve walking "among her Fruits and Flowe's / To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom" (8.44-45). The plants "at her coming sprung / And touch't by her fair tendance gladlier grew" (8.46-47). And after the Fall it is Eve who laments the broken connection between her and the flowers:

O Flowers
That never will in other Climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At Ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first op'ning bud, and gave ye Names,
Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
Your Tribes, and water from th' ambrosial Fount?

(11.273-279)

The embodiment of reciprocity which Eve acquires in her first moments of creation is actively performed and in her performance she wills good, not only for herself, but also for the flora of Eden.

In reaction to God's warning, Eve also learns that self-knowledge—all the beautiful qualities which she beholds—will not, on its own, completely activate her spiritual perfection. She must not only learn about the beauty on the earth, but also about wisdom and reason as well as grace—these matters she will learn about as she works with Adam. As Joan M. Webber explains, "the first acts of her life portray a familiar dilemma: she wants to reflect upon herself, to look at herself in a pool and gain self-knowledge, but in order to know herself she is required to turn her attention to Adam, an alien other"(12). While self-knowledge is important it is not sufficient on its own.[43] Webber continues to state, "the whole relationship between Adam and Eve, in fact, is affected by this stress between self-sufficiency and mutual need....either posture, overindulged, becomes destructive, and balance is hard to maintain"(12). Milton places importance on the need for balance within individual humans as well as within the relationships that they have. Because all matter is interconnected with humankind and humankind require each other in order to grow and perfect, neither Adam nor Eve are sufficient to stand on their own. Yet at the same time it is imperative for Milton to demonstrate Adam and Eve's equality in terms of human ontology. Neither God nor Adam prevents Eve from gaining self-identity or self-knowledge, nor do they force her to be subordinate to Adam. Both Adam and God, in fact, prevent Eve from being inadequate both as an individual and as a co-partner in her relationship with Adam giving her the means to reflect "How beauty is excelled by manly grace / And Wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (4.490-491). The mirror-pool, in recognizing beauty, gives only one, though essential, attribute of being human. The pool has given Eve a gift that she can and will use as long as she continues to exercise and enhance her willingness for her own perfected potential. In conclusion, by reflecting on Eve's initial innocence and inexperience with her image and her decision to will her perfection by joining Adam with the qualities she acquires during her moment of self-awareness, it is evident that Eve activates her spiritual perfection. When she joins Adam she is equally ready to begin life in the garden.

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[43] Webber's choice to see Adam as Eve's "*alien* other" seems quite dichotomizing in terms of Adam and Eve's relationship, I believe that Adam is "other" in the sense that he represents an different body of knowledge at this time, but is not "other" because he is human like Eve.

Autonomy and Ecology in the Separation Scene

The portrayal of Eve as fully committed to the ecological ethic indicates Milton's intention to illustrate her as an equal with Adam in terms of ontological worth. Yet, the scene of the morning of the separation of Adam and Eve's work tasks leading to Eve's temptation by the serpent is often analysed in terms of Eve's need for autonomy. This inevitably leads most readers to conclude that Eve's failure in this respect is an indication that Milton believes she should have remained subordinate to Adam. Conventionally is it suggested that Eve, as a woman, did not contain the full faculties to repel Satan's shrewdness. Yet as Lewalski states,

> Milton's Eve is not foredoomed to fall before Satan's wiles because her intellectual powers are comparatively weaker than Adam....Milton has taken great care to present the first woman as having faculties "sufficient" to make free and responsible choices—always for Milton the precondition for any practice of growth or virtue.
>
> (*On Women* 14, 15)

As already illustrated, not only is Milton's Eve created as Adam's equal in terms of their humanity, but she is also given qualities which ground her to the earth as well as an equal education concerning the universe. By no means is Eve lesser in faculty compared to Adam, and by no means does Milton demand that Eve's failure to resist Satan is a result of her gender or that it results in the inevitable subordination of women to men. In fact, Eve has shown remarkably more competence than Adam with regard to the act of cultivation.

The Bible itself is a limited source in terms of this scene. Genesis notes that the "serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field" (3:1) and he says to Adam and Eve "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (3:4, 5). Eve's reaction is then described: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (3:6). Milton's addition to the story of the Fall itself is the separation of Adam and Eve which entails a lengthy discussion of free-will.

While Milton sets up this scene as a narrative strategy to separate the two so that, as depicted in the Bible, Eve is the first to fall, his intent is not to blame Eve for the first sin; while he follows the biblical narrative, he also gives Adam and Eve sufficient reason for attempting separate work. While Milton is constrained by the story of the Bible in terms of details, he does Eve justice in his illustration. Adam and Eve's relationship is depicted as one of cooperation, interdependency and responsibility to the garden rather than as one of subordination of one gender to another. And, according to Milton's belief in the doctrine of free will, Adam cannot force Eve to act against her will: he must let her choose her own path.

Milton begins this scene with a discussion between Adam and Eve: when Adam gives "mild answer" (9.226), Eve replies as if she has received "some unkindness" with "sweet austere composure" (9.271, 272). Eve first suggests dividing the labour between herself and Adam, for, "until more hands / Aid us, the work under our labour grows / Luxurious by restraint" (9.207-209). At the same time she is stressing the quick and chaotic nature of the garden: "what we by day / Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, / One night or two with wanton growth derides / Tending to wild" (9.209-212). As Diane McColley maintains, "her proposal is a serious one" (*Ethic* 68), because, read in terms of ecological awareness, Eve's suggestion for "winding the woodbine and ivy around the trunks of trees, in their arbour" (69) shows her awareness "of the forms and needs of created things" (68). According to McColley, Eve is not "obsessed with domestic tidiness; growing in shade, vines need to climb for light and are constructed to clasp" (69).[44] Milton's Eve is proposing to separate because she understands her responsibility to the earth as essential to both her and Adam's well being. Eve is actively practising her ethic in which she yields preference for interaction and intimacy with Adam for the greater responsibility of tending the garden. While it is more pleasing to work with Adam she points out that working in close proximity with Adam "intermits / Our days work brought to little, though begun / Early, and th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd" (9.223-225). Adam, with compliment to Eve's diligence in talking care of the garden, agrees replying, "nothing lovelier can be found / In Woman, than to study household good, / And good works in her Husband to promote" (9.233-235), revealing his admiration for her attentiveness to the garden and how it inspires him to work as well. Yet, with good reason, Adam indicates to Eve that "not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd, / Labour.... / For not to irksome toil, but to delight / He made us, and delight to Reason join'd" (9.235, 236,242,243). Adam then also remarks on the possibility of Satan's presence in the garden, expressing his need to protect Eve from this danger, or at least, to endure it with her. To this Eve replies, "But that thou shouldst my firmness doubt / To God or thee, because we have a foe, / May tempt it, I expected not to hear" (9.279-281), stating her offence at the claim that she is not capable of her faithfulness to both God and Adam. Adam answers again with the need to stay together and Eve replies, "If this be our condition, thus to dwell / In narrow circuit strait'n'd by a Foe.... / How are we happy, still in fear of harm? (9.9.323,324,327). Adam then reiterates Milton's doctrine of free will: "God left free the Will, for what obeys / Reason, is free, and Reason he made right"(9.351,352), and he tells Eve to "Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more; / Go in thy native innocence, rely / On what thou has of virtue, summon all, / For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine"(9.372-375). Eve then, with Adams "permission" (9.378) goes into the woods by herself,

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[44] McColley also notes that during the late seventeenth century the use of the woodbine and ivy was suggested by both John Beale and John Evelyn for use in combating the "noxious fumes" of London, making Eve's choice "horticulturally and politically apt for keeping the world in reparation" (Ethic 68).

> thus forewarn'd
> Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words

> Touch'd only, that our trial, when least sought,
> May find us both perhaps far less prepar'd,
> The willinger I go, nor much expect
> A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
> So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
>
> (9.378-384)

McColley suggests that this debate is political:

> Adam and Eve are working out a form of government that will preserve their liberty even in the face of the predatory invasion of Satan....Eve wants neither pleasure nor fear to reduce their creative freedom or their attention to the other lives in their care.
>
> (69)

The move to separate is recognition on Eve's part that interdependence within their relationship necessitates freedom of individual choice—lest one member be subordinated to the other. Eve's proposal is rendered appropriate to both the garden's needs and their own needs because it activates the responsibility of caretaking while negotiating an interdependent relationship based on free will. McColley states, "Eve's desire to work for a while in her own way had sprung from a healthy desire to dress the garden in obedience to the commandment, and to preserve the liberty on which their obedience and mutual love depend" (*Milton's Eve* 24, 25). Their discussion and final decision illustrate Eve merging "horticulture with ethical choice" (69) as she "Betook to her Groves" (9.388) clearly demonstrating her commitment to the practice of an environmental ethic. In this manner "Adam and Eve are seeking a balance between personal and ecological relations. In doing so they take part in a hierarchy that transmits beneficence from God to all creatures" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 232). Their discussion and agreement to work separately in light of the possibility of danger shows a governing ethic which values individual freedom as well as collective ecological concerns. Adam and Eve do not lose sight of the earth which is their home and their physical connection to the divine. Not only do they understand that they are free human beings who have been given enough wisdom and reason to continue their faithfulness to God, they are also committed to an ethic which they are responsible to and through which they are to grow; concurrently, the earth grows too.

In light of this reading, it is difficult to concur with John Rumrich's statement that, "The garden's relentless fecundity, 'tending to wilde', frustrates Adam and Eve's labours to control their environment, provides a rationale for their separation, and establishes a material cause for the Fall" (133). Like Lewalski who suggests, "Eve's proposal that they undertake separate gardening tasks as a means to greater efficiency is shown to lead directly to the Fall" (*On Women* 6), Rumrich looks to the separation scene for reason for the Fall. Yet, as McColley explains,

> Doctrinally, there could be no evil concupiscence before the Fall, but the idea of a 'good temptation' raises the difficult question of exactly where temptation ends and sin begins. Milton dramatized the

> difference in the Fall itself; until then, both Adam and Eve resist temptation and thereby grow in strength and wisdom.
>
> (*Milton's Eve* 157)

McColley is drawing from "The Christian Doctrine", where Milton states, "Good temptations are those which God uses to tempt even righteous men…He does not do this for his own sake—as if he did not know what sort of men they would turn out to be—but either to exercise or demonstrate their faith or patience" (338). The separation scene is an illustration of a good temptation in which Adam and Eve prove need of moral exercise, and thus successfully demonstrate their faith to God. Adam and Eve's decision and agreement to separate is based on their faithfulness to individual free will and their collective ecological commitment, and their argument acts as a good temptation which teaches the art of interdependent relationships. In essence, Milton's narrative strategy to separate them also allows him to establish their prelapsarian ability to converse, to act interdependently and to commit to a governing ethic. Before Satan encounters Eve and tempts her, causing her to sin, Adam and Eve represent the epitome of a functioning marriage relationship.

Satan (En)Counters Eve's Environmental Ethic

Milton's narration of Satan's encounter with Eve, resulting in the Fall, confuses two essential elements of Adam and Eve's education: the need to concern themselves only with earthly knowledge and the active responsibility to tend the earth. Milton begins with Eve conscientiously practicing her environmental ethic:

> Veil'd in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
> Half spi'd, so thick the roses bushing round
> About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
> Each Flow'r of slender stalk, whose head though gay
> Carnation, Purple, Azure, or specked with Gold,
> Hung drooping unsustain'd, them she upstays
> Gently with myrtle band,
>
> (9.425-431)

Unaware of Satan's presence Eve meticulously cares for her plants. Satan is well aware of the ecology of the scene. Having spent most of his time of late travelling between sulphurous hell and blissful heaven Satan is attentive to the stark differences in quality of life between the two. Satan describes the experience of watching Eve working in her garden as "one who long in populous City pent, / Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Air, / Forth issuing on a Summer's Morn to breathe /Among the pleasant Villages and Farms" (9.444-447) and he, at the sight of Eve, "for the time remain'd, / Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd, / Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge" (9.464-466). Nevertheless, this momentary inertness is not sustained and his delight "tortures him now more, the more he sees, / Of pleasure not for him ordain'd: then soon / Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts / Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites" (9.469-472).Satan's intention to beguile humankind is rooted in a jealousy of humankind's connection to God through their origin in the earth:

> A creature form'd of Earth...
> Exalted from so base original,
> With Heav'nly spoils...,
> Man he made, and for him built
> Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
> Him Lord pronounc'd...O indignity!
>
> (9.149-154)

Yet while Satan seeks to spoil humankind, the course of his scheme to destroy humankind is not fully realized until he encounters Eve. Satan "sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find / Eve separate, he wish'd, but not with hope" (9.421, 422). Then, in finding Eve alone, Satan devises his plan. While it seems that Satan preys on Eve because of her femininity, her softness and her angelical form (9.458)—perhaps what would seem an easier target—it is in fact her close relation to the earth which makes her "opportune to all attempts" (9.481). Satan is aware that Adam, more likely to forget Raphael's warning and engage in a philosophical conversation which does not concern him, is, according to Satan, a "higher intellectual" (9.483) in comparison to both Eve and himself. Adam will be harder to debate with because Satan feels he has been "debased" and "Enfeebled" (9.487, 488) "to what [he] was in Heav'n" (9.488), an easy match for Adam. Eve, a better match intellectually as Satan believes, also represents "delight, / The smell of grain, or tedded Grass, or Kine, / Or Dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound" (9.449-451)—the whole semblance of humankind's physical and metaphysical connection to the divine. Satan assaults her by manipulating and beguiling the very earth that she trusts and cares for.

As Eve is "us'd / To such disport before her through the Field, / From every Beast...duteous to her call" (9.519-522) it is not the appearance of the serpent that is unexpected but the fact that he speaks which amazes Eve, having thought "God on their Creation-Day / Created mute to all articulate sound" (9.556, 557). And although it seems like Satan is persuading her with his voice and sweet words, the underlying deviance of Satan's motives is that he has disguised himself in the clothing of the earth, and therefore is preying on Eve's responsibility and love toward the earth and its creatures. He continues his quest by thus describing how he received his voice—a perfect segue into describing the most perfect and fruitful tree in the entire garden. As Satan describes to Eve this tree "Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix't, / Ruddy and Gold" (9.5.77, 578) he plays on Eve's inclination to sustain and encourage the growth of plants. When Eve asks where this tree is located she does so because she is aware that

> many are the Trees of God that grow
> In Paradise, and various and unknown
> To us, in such abundance lies our choice,
> As leaves a greater store of Fruit untouched,
> Still hanging incorruptible, till men

> Grow up to their provision, and more hands
> Help to disburden Nature of her Birth.
>
> (9.618-624)

Eve's environmental ethic appears as she remarks upon the sustainability of Eden to support more humans as well as the formerly emphasised need of more hands to cultivate the garden. To immerse herself in the earth and its creatures is a responsibility which Eve takes seriously. Satan is able to persuade Eve because she displays sincere devotion to the garden and is curious about all its various flora and fauna. Satan also tempts her by describing that not only does the fruit of this tree urge him not to defer "hunger and thirst at once" (9.586) but it creates a "Strange alteration…to degree / Of Reason in my inward Powers" (9.599, 600) (which, he adds, causes him to worship Eve). Satan's illustration parallels elements of Raphael's description of angelic nourishment, invoking memory of Raphael's statement, "And from these corporeal nutriments perhaps / Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit" (5.496, 497). Satan plays upon the ontological hierarchy of perfection to persuade Eve to eat the fruit. And even as she reiterates the commandment from God, Satan continues to play upon Raphael's words using himself as an example of a creature who "life more perfet have attain'd" (9.689) by eating the fruit. Satan even alludes to Raphael's explanation of angels eating human food as he fiendishly states, "And what are Gods that Man may not become / As they, participating God-like food" (9.716, 717)? By invoking the strongest elements of Raphael's education to Adam and Eve Satan lures Eve into what seems a earnest situation. Convinced by Satan that the fruit is "the cure of all" (9.776) and will "feed at once both Body and Mind" (9.779) she chooses to eat the fruit.

Once she is "Satiat[ed] at length" (9.792) Eve's ethic is remarkably altered. Instead of praising God from "whom / All things proceed, and up to him return" (9.469, 470), a prelapsarian reaction to the abundance of creation, Eve praises the tree itself and promises "henceforth my early care / Not without Song, each Morning, and due praise / Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease / Of thy full branches" (9.799-802). Milton parallels the prelapsarian connection to the earth where praise moves from God back to God with the postlapsarian disconnection to the earth where praise begins and ends with the earth. And while it would seem that this represents a closer connection to the earth, like Satan's deceptive mimicking of Raphael, this connection is illusory and Eve is performing an idolatrous act. Maureen Quilligan explains, "If the centre of *Paradise Lost* is a hymn of a creature to creator, then for that creature to forget his (sic) original is the greatest sin" (96). In her postlapsarian state Eve sings to the tree instead of singing alongside the tree to God. Likewise, after Adam has eaten the fruit, their lovemaking is a lustful celebration of themselves rather than a celebration of their human connection to the divine. Milton's Satan destroys the connection between humankind and God by corrupting the very ethic by which Adam and Eve have been taught to live, and in doing so, McColley states, "achieves (though imperfectly) his desire to bring sin and death upon human beings and their hierarchical responsibility, the biosphere" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 233). Their altered ontological state emphasises their Satanic attitude toward the earth: "As with new Wine intoxicated both / They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel / Divinity within them breeding wings / Where with to scorn the Earth" (9.1008-1011). Adam and Eve now embody the Calvinist and Cartesian attitudes against which Milton is writing. Milton continues to emphasise Adam and Eve's disconnection to the earth by illustrating the earth's reaction to the separation from the divine creator.

Postlapsarian Eden

As well as telling us where we come from, our [creation] myths also tell us that something went badly wrong, that we humans have been exiled from home, ousted from the garden….Acting differently from the rest of creation, separating ourselves from divine will, we broke the harmony.

David Suzuki, The Sacred Balance, *185, 186*

As the earth responds to Adam and Eve in prelapsarian Eden with positive growth, so the earth responds to Adam and Eve's postlapsarian state with negative advancement. Richard DuRocher relates how

> Milton's focus on the wounded earth at the pivotal moment of the human drama shows how closely interconnected is the health of the human and natural bodies. Accordingly, the original human sin is mortal not only to our nature but also to the Earth's creative power. The Fall opens a wound in creation that remains unhealed.
>
> (115)

Milton's description of the Fall is finalized by the earth's instantaneous and severe reaction, and his twice uttered description emphasises the disconnection of humankind to the earth. As Ken Hiltner states, Adam and Eve's sin "results from a move away from the earth…the opposite of the humility of one rooted in the earth, as the word 'humility' derives from 'humus', earth. The momentary lack of humility…is the source of the wound felt by the earth" (73). When Eve sins the "Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat / Sighing through all her Works gave sign of woe, / That all was lost" (9.782-784), and when Adam sins the "Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again / In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan, / Sky low'r'd and muttering Thunder, some sad drops / Wept at completing of the mortal Sin" (9.1000-1003). Milton's use of pathetic fallacy is more than a poetic device; he is describing the rebirth of nature in light of original sin. Nature's rebirth now entails "Thorns also and Thistles" (10.202) as well as "cold and heat / Scarce tolerable, and from the North to call / Decrepit Winter, from the South to bring / Solstitial summer's heat" (10.653-656). Milton describes the angels realigning the celestial bodies, teaching them

> when to show'r,
> Which of them rising with the Sun, or falling,
> Should prove tempestuous: to the Winds they set
> Their corners, when with bluster to confound
> Sea, Air, and Shore, the Thunder when to roll
> With terror through the dark Aereal Hall.
>
> (10.662-667)

Milton suggests two hypotheses for the change in the seasons; either the angels turned the earth on its axis or they forced the sun to change its course. Nonetheless, this brought "change, / Of Seasons to each Clime" (10.678), resulting in "ice / And snow and hail and stormy gust and flaw" (10.696, 697) "thunderous Clouds" (10.702) and "*Levant* and the *Ponent* winds" (10.704). All these things will impede Adam and Eve's gardening ease, thus hindering their relationship with the earth. The ground is now "Curs'd…for thy sake" (10.201) and no longer will harvest be effortless (10.205). And instead of gradual elevation to higher levels of being, Adam and Eve, once dead, will return to the ground. Their bodies, which once "from those corporeal nutriments…at last turn all to spirit" (5.496, 497) will instead descend, and return to the earth from out of which they were created.

Adam and Eve's disconnection to the earth is also described by Milton through Adam's loss of connection to the animals. No longer do they stand "much in awe / Of man but fled him, or with countenance grim / Glar'd on him passing" (10.712-714). With the connection broken the animals begin to prey on each other "through fierce antipathy: / Beast now with Beast gan war, and Fowl with Fowl, / And Fish with Fish; to graze the Herb all leaving, / Devour'd each other" (10.709-712). Here Milton echoes Aquinas' prelapsarian Eden where dominion equals power. No longer do the animals reciprocate Adam's love for them nor do they respect his position. Adam is incensed and blames God for creating him in the first place. He cries, "Why comes not Death, / …with once thrice acceptable stroke / To end me?" (10.854-856) while lamenting his loss of connection: "O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales and Bowers, / With other echo late I taught your Shades / to answer, and resound far other Song" (10.860-862). Before he was disconnected from the earth Adam was able to initiate song between the elements of the natural world.

In prelapsarian Eden Adam and Eve's relationship is sustained and perfected by their relationship to the earth. As they tend the garden they learn to work together and they enact an active and interdependent relationship. Their discourse throughout the poem is rooted in reciprocity and free will. Now, in postlapsarian Eden, they too become disconnected and "high winds worse within / Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate, / Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord and shook sore / Their inward State of Mind, calm Region once" (9.1122-1125). They argue and blame each other for the Fall, citing each other's gender differences as the cause. In prelapsarian Eden genders were positive aspects of a whole relationship; in postlapsarian Eden the whole relationship is severed and their genders are accentuated. Wittreich suggests, "Impressions of inequality registered by Adam before the Fall have now hardened into attitudes that....modulate into misogyny" (95). Eve snidely remarks to Adam, "Was I to have never parted from thy side? / As good have grown there still a lifeless Rib. / Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head / Command me absolutely not to go" (9.1153-1156). Adam retorts back, "Thus it shall befall / Him who to worth in Women overtrusting / Lets her Will rule" (9.1182-1184). Milton ends book 9 in utter turmoil, relating to the reader Adam and Eve's discord: "Thus they in mutual accusation spent / The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning, / And of their vain contest appeared not end" (9.1187-1189).

Yet discord is not sustained. In admitting their individual wrongs they apply their prelapsarian knowledge of active and independent relationships to their postlapsarian state. Adam to Eve states, "Thy frailty and infirmer Sex forgiv'n, / To me committed and by me expos'd" (10.956, 957) and suggests recreating their interdependent relationship by discussing "how we may lighte'n / Each other's burden in our share of woe" (10.960, 961). Eve, with "recovering heart" (10.966) says to Adam that she is "hopeful to regain / Thy Love, the sole contentment of [her] heart" (10.972, 973). And although Eve suggests suicide—"Destruction with destruction to destroy" (10.1006)—Adam immediately draws upon the prelapsarian ethic by proposing to battle death with creativity, Eve's "Fruit of thy Womb" (10.1053). Proactively, Adam is suggesting instead *creativity with creativity to create*.

Immediately after this conversation they return their thoughts to the earth, the divine and the broken connection within the universe. Adam suggests prayer as a means of invoking God's pity and he also hopes God will "teach us further by what means to shun / Th' inclement seasons" (10.1062, 1063). Adam is attempting to rebuild life on earth in its fallen state. He hopes for knowledge concerning fire "And what may else be remedy or cure / To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought" (10.1079, 1080) so that their lives will be sustained until "we end / In dust, our final rest and native home" (10.1085). Adam accepts his earthly fate and suggests to Eve to return to "the place / Repairing where he judg'd us" (10.1086, 1087). Fiore states, "The fact that Milton has so many incidents of sorrow and repentance even before Adam is allowed the vision which will reveal to him the true good to come from the *felix culpa* indicates that Adam can still make right use of his reason and free will" (57).

Removal from Eden

After the Fall the ontological hierarchy of perfection becomes disordered but is not necessarily dismantled. In fact, the education that Adam and Eve have received during their time in prelapsarian Eden is now more pertinent because sin impedes Adam and Eve's ability to cultivate against the chaotic nature of the earth and their own relationship. McColley suggests, "By placing labour and the beginnings of the arts and sciences before the Fall, Milton affirms human work and creativity as both natural and regenerative" (*Gust* 189). As Milton describes it, the Son of God undertakes intercession between humankind and the divine. While Adam and Eve are not allowed to continue to reside in Eden because "the Law [God] gave to Nature forbids: / Those pure immortal Elements that know / No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul" (11.49-51), God does "send [them] from the Garden forth to till / The ground whence [they were] taken, fitter Soil" (11.261, 262). Labour remains the means by which they can connect to the divine.

Michael then relates to Adam (and Eve through a dream) how they shall live in the postlapsarian world, echoing the former environmental ethic as described in prelapsarian Eden. Michael addresses nourishment in a fallen state, explaining, "The rule of not too much, by temperance taught / In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence / Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight" (11.531-533). Thus following temperance in nourishment, Michael advises psychological temperance concerning life and death: "Nor love thy Life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st / Live well, how long or short permit to Heav'n" (11.553, 554). Michael also considers fallen knowledge, warning Adam not to "Judge…what is best / By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet, / Created, as thou art, to nobler end / Holy and pure, conformity divine" (11.603-606) echoing Raphael in 8.635: moderation of passion is integral to living a contented life. Furthermore, Michael later on advises they

> hope no higher, though all the Stars
> Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal Powers,
> All the secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
> Or works of God in Heaven, Air, Earth, or Sea,
> And all the riches of this World enjoyd'st,
> And all the rule, one Empire;
>
> (12.576-581)

echoing Raphael's instruction to consider things of the earth. Yet, in their postlapsarian state they must add the things that came naturally while in Eden:

> add Faith,
> Add Virtue, Patience Temperance, add Love,
> By name to come called Charity, the soul

Of all the rest: then thou will not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.

(12.583-588)

The restoration of Milton's environmental ethic begins at the end of Book 11 with the description of the flood and the destruction of the earth. Postlapsarian earth must be reborn, recreated. And, as Michael explains, nature depends on humankind for its survival now more than ever: "God attributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell" (11.837-839). Yet the great baptismal deluge brings the promise of a constant earth, "Day and Night / Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and Hoary frost / Shall behold their course, till fire purge all things new" (11.898-90) enabling adaptation of the environmental ethic to the postlapsarian world. Although Milton's earth is changed, the directive of responsibility to care for the earth does not change. Jeffery Theis explains, "A postlapsarian ethic, in many ways, will be more difficult to follow because its signs are more ambiguous, but it is not entirely different from the ethic Adam and Eve followed in Eden" (79). McColley suggests human employment "after the Fall is spiritual, ethical, as it was without suffering and corruption, before the Fall. The arts of regenesis spring, even in grosser air, from a paradisal consciousness—a multiply empathetic, long term ecological responsiveness" (186). The knowledge and instruction imparted upon Adam and Eve in prelapsarian Eden is accommodated to apply to the fallen earth.

Although he illustrates a time when humankind "Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace, / Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop" (12.17, 18) and "spend their days in joy unblam'd, and dwell / Long time in peace by Families and Tribes" (12.22, 23), Michael contrasts this postlapsarian hope with postlapsarian warning. By describing to Adam the horror of Babel, "The Plain, wherein a black bituminous gruge / Boils out from underground, the mouth of Hell; / Of Brick, and of that stuff they cast to build / A City and Tower, whose top may reach Heav'n" (12.41-44) Michael makes certain Adam recognizes the lack of environmental ethic embedded in this construction. Not only does the construction of Babel destroy the earth, Adam realizes that this type of creativity will not sustain Nimrod and "his rash Army, where thin Air / Above the Clouds will pine his entrails gross, / And famish him of breath, if not Bread" (12.76-79). McColley, calling Babel "an anti-environmental feat that issues in the 'hideous gabble' of confounded language" (*Beneficent Hierarchies* 235), explains "The work [of Babel] imitates the building of Pandemonium under the leadership of Mammon" (235) who serves as "the archetype of the ecological devastation" (235). Like the building of Pandemonium, Babel shows the destruction caused when humans become arrogant. The destructive forces of both Pandemonium and Babel are rooted in the destruction and desecration of matter that is intended for creativity and the sustainability of humankind. And in response to Babel, Adam learns, humankind will wander "In the wide Wilderness" (12.224) until the Son overcomes the serpent (310-313). In this context, earth's transformation into wilderness is a metaphor for ethical confusion warning the reader of the dangers of a lost ethic.

Eve's Creative Power

Even in light of her fallen state, Eve displays intense responsibility to her ethical mandate. Her acceptance of her role as the "source of life" (11.169) is paralleled with her suggestion to continue to tend the garden "though in fallen state" (11.180). When Michael reveals the charge for their removal from the garden Adam is "Heart-struck with chilling gripe of sorrow" (11.264) and Eve "with audible lament" (11.266) cries for all her flowers. What she considers her native soil must now be reconsidered, and bound to Adam she must accept "Where he abides…[her] native soil" (11.292). Yet, as Milton establishes through the entire poem—their relationship is reciprocal. As much as Eve is bound to Adam in terms of a new resting place, Adam is bound to Eve in terms of redemption. Adam's choice in soil as the birthing ground for the seeds of future crops is equivalent to Eve's womb where "the Promis'd Seed shall all restore" (12.623). In this respect, Eve is "rightly call'd, Mother of all Mankind, / Mother of all things living, since by thee, / Man is to live, and all things live for Man" (11.159-162). And both parties, as Milton suggests, play an important role in both acts of gardening and procreation.

Conclusion

Throughout my thesis I have concentrated on the role of gardening in Eden with specific attention to Eve. And while I seek to dispel notions of subordination and inadequacy, or the idea that Eve merely functions as a reproductive vessel, I do not mean to suggest that Eve is, in fact, the better gardener, or that she has the ability to become closer to God than Adam; claiming Eve's superiority in cultivation practices negates my intent. And while it seems, at times, that Eve lacks some logical reasoning, similarly, it seems Adam lacks the ability to ground himself in the earth. I believe Milton is intentional in this portrayal. His illustration of the first humans suggests a relationship of reciprocity—meaning that Eve must teach Adam how to connect to the garden, and Adam must convey reason to Eve.

Paraphrasing J. B. Jackson, American landscape historian, Fredrick Turner[45] suggests that the "function of art in any landscape…it so allow people to participate emotionally in their place of living" (*Spirit of Place* x). The emotional and spiritual connection that Adam and Eve have with Eden is a result of their ability to create art in Eden and, more interestingly, out of Eden. Created with the potential to establish a seamless, fully creative relationship with their environment Adam and Eve are enabled to develop their human perfection—a fully integrated community with nature and the divine. As Adam and Eve develop their skills—from physically tilling the soil to metaphysically tilling their souls—they enact their relationship to the earth as informed by their ecological ethic. Ignoring these ethics has serious implications. Misuse of the earth by Adam and Eve is a rejection of the perfect, *in potentia*, connection with the divine. In summary, the integration of an ecological ethic based on symbiotic community of humankind, nature and the divine influences and sustains the potential for the perfection of human ontology in relation to the divine; disintegration of this ethic thus causes a physically and spiritually dissonant and decontextualized community and impedes the development of any human perfection.

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[45] A different Fredrick Turner than cited earlier, this American literary critic focuses on humankind's relationship to the land specifically as seen through American literature. He is also the author of Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New York: Viking Press, 1980).

The inclusion of an environmental ethic in *Paradise Lost* goes beyond the usual biological scope of humankind's relationship to the land. In *Paradise Lost* Milton suggests that Adam and Eve are contextualized *by* their environment as well as creating context *for* their environment. Ecology in *Paradise Lost* is social, scientific and spiritual. Nature intensifies and extends its physical properties by becoming a meaningful part of humankind's ontological context. In this respect nature becomes more than shelter or sustenance; it becomes integral to the cosmic narrative.

As God, nature and humankind—all material entities—exist as one continuous hierarchy, all are equally important to the cosmic myth. The natural world and humankind cannot be separated because they are two parts of one whole story. The ecological ethic, enacted through labour and creativity, allows for contextualization. Rather than separating humankind and their natural environment, allowing for relationships of power and dominion—

humankind over the earth—Milton establishes a wholly integrated and interdependent universe. In doing this, he avoids Cartesian dualism and Calvinist theology, both of which support humankind's self-centered, destructive and controlling use of nature.

It is in this context that Adam and Eve's relationship must be read. Given the potential to create, to grow, to choose right they are enabled to acquire knowledge and comprehension of their universe. The ecological ethic—the responsibility to labour and create with respect to the earth—is both a physical and a spiritual guide. Gardening allows for physical communication and Adam and Eve's praise establishes spiritual communication. Likewise the earth benefits from their care and provides shelter and sustenance. This relationship of reciprocity set in the contextualized, symbiotic community of Eden transfers on to Adam and Eve's marriage. Monist concepts of power allow for hierarchy of matter, avoiding dominant power of one being over another, and leaving room for relationships of respect and responsibility rather than condescension and control. In this way it is possible to understand Adam and Eve's relationship as symbiotic in itself. Both have a responsibility to the other, and both are taught to respect their differing qualities.

Adam and Eve are a part of a whole community—and they learn from this community the acts of establishing an interdependent marriage. As two parts of one whole their individual actions affect the other—this is what it means to be part of a symbiotic community—something Eve forgets during her encounter with Satan and something Adam forgets during their fateful scene of separation. On the whole, the ecological ethic proposed by Milton is a means by which Adam and Eve explore their environment, each other and their individuality. Misuse in following these concepts, as expressed to them by Raphael, leads to destruction of their environment, and, most importantly, decontextualizes their lives on earth. Eating from the sacred tree is an act of misuse of the land. Its implications are ominous and the relationship between Adam and Eve and their environment is suddenly disrupted. The continuity between the land and humankind is no longer seamless. Michael shows Adam how respect is lost for the land, for animals and for other human beings and illustrates the human tendency to seek power after the Fall.

The symbiotic community in which Adam and Eve once lived in is now radically altered. Yet Milton does not concede to a fully irreparable situation. Symbiosis with the ecosystem is attainable in the postlapsarian world, and this community is created through the same practices as in prelapsarian Eden. The one thing that changes is humankind's fallen attitude towards earth, and the earth's altered state. Milton emphasises the relationship between humankind and nature first by showing their connection and later their disconnection. Milton lets the earth change—roses with thorns, duelling animals, seasons with harsh weather—as symbolic of how the relationship is disrupted. Reciprocity is still necessary, but it is no longer functions without impediment. The earth reacts against humankind and, as time will tell, humankind will react against the earth.

The single most important consequence of the Fall is spiritual dissonance. As the context created by Nature for humankind is altered, humankind's ability to communicate with the divine is impeded. Humankind is decontextualized from their environment and thus is further separated from the divine. As Adam and Eve suggest, separation from the divine is reason for suicide. Yet, as Milton's God explains, "thou not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shall possess / A Paradise within thee, happier far" (12.585-587). Milton's concept of ecological ethics thus extends itself to the postlapsarian world. The Miltonic cosmos is restored—though imperfectly—through the grace of God. Thus, the reunion between humankind and their environment is representative of their redemption by their creator.

In effect, Milton's ecology is designed to provide a meaningful context for humankind to grow, to create, to survive and to acknowledge their creator. Milton's ecological ethics, by demanding labour of stewardship, allow for human contemplation on ontology and the divine. By participating in their environment through both labour and ritual praise Adam and Eve realize the possibility of their humanity. Likewise, innate connections to nature as well as learned practices enable a relationship with the divine.

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